peter **milligan** · chris **bachalo** · mark **pennington**

shade the changing man™

the american scream

"A deep and satisfying read."
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VERTIGO

shade the changing man

the american scream

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SHADE, THE CHANGING MAN: THE AMERICAN SCREAM
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McCARTHYISM

THERE ARE BILLIONS OF PEOPLE IN THE WORLD. AND I'M YOUNG AND PRETTY AND FANCY FREE. I'VE EVEN GOT A MAN WAITING FOR ME IN MY MOTEL ROOM.
BUT I'VE NEVER FELT SO ALONE IN ALL MY LIFE.
I'VE NEVER FELT SO CRAZY EITHER, AND I HAVE, IN MY TIME, BEEN PRETTY CRAZY.
I HOLD THE BOTTLE OF VODKA CLOSE TO MY CHEST AND TRY NOT TO LOOK AROUND ME. IF I DON'T LOOK THEY MIGHT ALL GO AWAY.
WE'RE IN TEXAS. MAYBE THAT'S IT. MAYBE ALL LITTLE TEXAN TOWNS ARE LIKE THIS.
NAH. ADMIT IT. IT'S ME. IT'S ME.
I'M OUT OF MY MIND.

IT'S USUALLY THE NIGHTS THAT ARE HARD. I FORGET NOT TO FEEL.
AT NIGHT I HAVE A VISITOR WHO SHOWS ME WHY I'M CRAZY. EVERY NIGHT HE COMES TO ME.
FREDS
EVERY NIGHT FOR THREE YEARS. HE NEVER MISSES.
I'LL GO BACK TO MY MOTEL AND DRINK. THEN I'LL COMMIT A MURDER.
DO YOU EVER WISH YOU WERE SOMEONE ELSE? YOU SHOULDN'T WISH FOR ANYTHING.
I'VE LEARNED HOW TO LIVE THIS LIFE NOW. THE TRICK IS NOT TO LIKE IT.
THE TRICK IS TO LIVE ON THE SURFACE. SKATE ON THE SHELL.
MY NAME IS KATHY GEORGE. I WISH IT WASN'T BUT IT IS. YESTERDAY WAS MY TWENTY-THIRD BIRTHDAY.
TODAY'S THE DAY THE MAN IN MY MOTEL ROOM WAS EXECUTED.

BACK AT THE MOTEL I THROW UP AND TRY NOT TO LOOK AT THE **GLOW** FROM THE **BEDROOM.** I TRY NOT TO THINK ABOUT **WHO'S** BEHIND THE DOOR.
YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO EITHER, IF YOU'D SEEN WHAT **I'D** SEEN.
I SAY OVER AND OVER AGAIN, I'M CRAZY, I'M CRAZY, I'M CRAZY. IT'S A HANDY LITTLE **MANTRA** I PICKED UP IN THE **MENTAL HOSPITAL**.
THREE YEARS AGO, BEFORE THE HOSPITAL, BEFORE I WAS CRAZY, MY FRIENDS **SAID** I WAS CRAZY, BUT I WASN'T. I WAS IN **LOVE**.
AT LEAST I **THOUGHT** I WAS IN LOVE, WHO KNOWS?
THEY SAID WE WERE **BOTH** CRAZY GOING TO LOUISIANA.
IT'S **STILL** THE **SOUTH**, THEY SAID, AND YOU'RE **WHITE** AND ROGER'S...
THEY USUALLY LEFT THE WORD **BLACK** UNSPOKEN OR **MOUTHED** IT SILENTLY LIKE YOU DO WITH "ADULT" WORDS WHEN YOU'RE TALKING NEAR CHILDREN.
OF COURSE **ROGER** THOUGHT WE WERE CRAZY TOO, BUT I WANTED THEM TO MEET. THE THREE PEOPLE I LOVED MOST IN THE WORLD.
MY MOM AND DAD AND ROGER.
WE WERE HALF A DAY LATE, BUT WHAT DID IT MATTER?
WE'D STOPPED OFF IN A FIELD TO MAKE LOVE. WE'D FALLEN ASLEEP. WHAT DID IT MATTER?

WE WERE HALF A DAY LATE, BUT WHAT DID IT MATTER?
I'M STARTING TO FEEL LIKE **SIDNEY POITIER**. PEOPLE ARE **STARING** AT US, KATHY.
SY FINGER T SHOP
YOU'RE JUST PARANOID. RELAX. MY FOLKS ARE COOL. EVERYONE ELSE CAN GO TO HELL.
IT WAS A LITTLE **DREAM** THEY'D HAD. GET AWAY FROM **NEW YORK**. DAD CONCENTRATES ON HIS **WRITING**, MOM RETURNS TO THE **SOUTH**, WHERE SHE WAS **BORN**.
THIS IS THE ONE. GET THE BAGS AND I'LL SEE IF THEY'RE HOME.
AND DON'T LOOK SO WORRIED.
THEY ALREADY **KNOW** WHO'S COMING TO DINNER.
HAPPY LITTLE IDIOT.

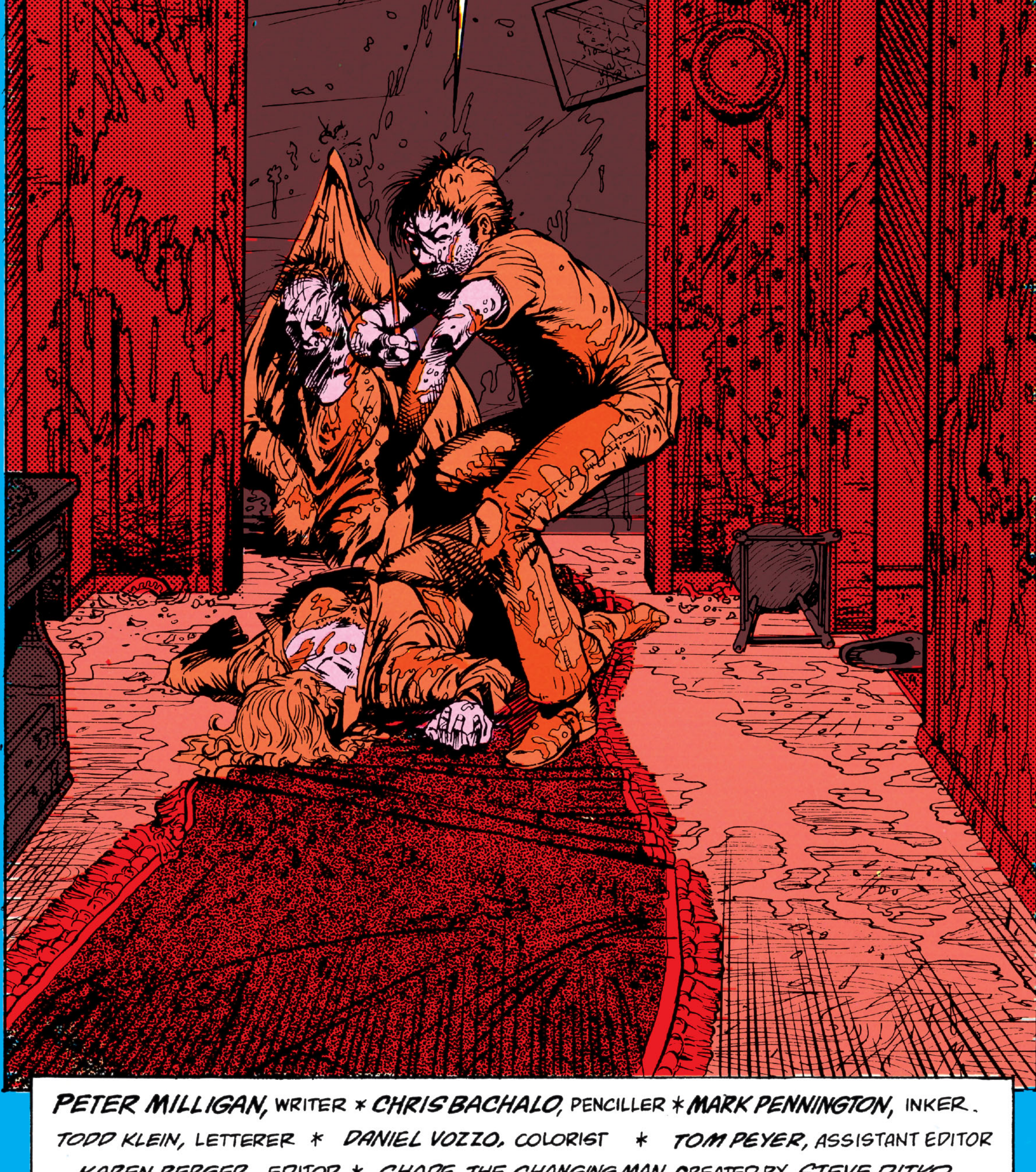
AFTERWARDS I JUST **LAY** THERE, SMELLING THE RICH EARTH, WATCHING BIG WHITE BIRDS GLIDE ACROSS THE BLUE SKY, LISTENING TO THE INSECTS.

I WAS **HAPPY** IN THAT FIELD. I COULD HAVE STAYED THERE **FOREVER**. I LIKED LIFE IN THOSE DAYS. I THOUGHT LIFE WAS MY **BEST FRIEND**.

I WAS A HAPPY LITTLE IDIOT, REALLY.

I WALKED UP THE DRIVE. I OPENED THE DOOR. A CAR ENGINE BACKFIRED IN THE DISTANCE.
MOM, DAD, IT'S ME...
I HADN'T SEEN MOM AND DAD IN **TWO MONTHS. I** WAS BUSY WITH EXAMS, **THEY** WERE BUSY MOVING IN.
MOM, DAD, IT'S ME...
I USED TO WORRY THEM SO. AT **SIXTEEN** I RAN OFF WITH SOME BIKERS, BUT THEY WERE SUCH **JERKS**.
MOM, DAD, IT'S ME...
AT **SEVENTEEN** I WAS CAUGHT SMOKING DOPE WITH A FOOTBALL PLAYER AND I THOUGHT MY PARENTS WERE JUST **STUPID**.
MOM, DAD, IT'S ME...
BY THE TIME I WAS **NINETEEN** I THOUGHT MY PARENTS HAD REALLY IMPROVED AND I STARTED TO **LIKE** THEM AGAIN.
MOM, DAD, IT'S ME...
BY THE TIME I WAS **TWENTY** I WAS STANDING IN THE DOOR OF THEIR NEW HOUSE AND I **SMELT** IT BEFORE I SAW IT. I **SMELT** IT.
THE **BLOOD**.
MOM, DAD, IT'S ME...

EXECUTION DAY


I'M NOT MAD. I *GET* MAD, BUT I'M *NOT* MAD.

PETER MILLIGAN, WRITER * **CHRIS BACHALO,** PENCILLER * **MARK PENNINGTON,** INKER.
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KAREN BERGER, EDITOR * SHADE, THE CHANGING MAN CREATED BY STEVE DITKO

KNOW WHY I DO IT? YOU WANNA KNOW WHY I DO IT?
CAUSE I *WANT* TO DO IT, PERIOD.

POLICE!
STOP OR I SH--
WUUMP
YOU FOLKS OKAY?
IT WAS STILL THE SOUTH.

IT'S ALL A BLUR AFTER THAT. I REMEMBER I **HOWLED** AND I **HOWLED** AND I **HOWLED.** I HOWLED FOR MOM AND DAD AND ROGER.
I SCRATCHED THE WALLS, SCRATCHED MYSELF AND MY MIND WAS IN A MILLION PIECES AND I COULDN'T GATHER ALL THE PIECES AT ONCE.
EVERY NIGHT HE CAME TO ME. CAME TO MY BED. I'D TAKE THE KNIFE FROM HIM. I'D RAM IT INTO HIS **HEART,** HIS **NECK,** HIS **FACE.**
BUT HE **NEVER DIED.** HE KEPT COMING **BACK** AND **BACK** AND I **KNEW,** EVERY NIGHT.
I KNEW IT WAS **MY FAULT.** KNEW I WAS TO **BLAME.** I'D KILLED ROGER BY TAKING HIM TO THE SOUTH. I'D LET MY PARENTS BE KILLED BECAUSE I SHOWED UP LATE.
WHILE **THEY** WERE BEING BUTCHERED **I** WAS SCREWING IN A FIELD.
I WONDERED IF SOMETHING DEEP DOWN IN ME **WANTED** THEM TO DIE. THIS INTERESTED THE DOCTORS, SEEMED TO FIT IN WITH THEIR THEORIES, TO PLEASE THEM. I **WANTED** TO PLEASE THEM.
A **NURSE** TOLD ME WE WERE **ALL** WRONG AND IT MIGHT JUST HAVE BEEN **GOD'S PUNISHMENT** FOR GOING WITH A **BLACK MAN.**
FOR HE WORKS IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS.

THEN MOM AND DAD'S **MONEY** RAN OUT SO IT SEEMED I WAS ***TOO POOR*** TO BE CRAZY. I WAS PUT ON A ***GREYHOUND*** TO ***SALT LAKE CITY.***
SALT LAKE CITY
I LEFT AS SOON AS I COULD. I HITCHED A RIDE WITH A GREASEBALL BUSINESSMAN. I EVEN LET HIM TAKE ME TO HIS HOTEL ROOM. WHILE HE WENT TO THE ***JOHN***--
YOU MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE, HONEY!
--I WENT TO HIS ***WALLET.***
HE HAD ENOUGH MONEY TO KEEP HIMSELF CRAZY FOR ***MONTHS.*** I BOUGHT A CAR. I DROVE. I MOVED. I KEPT MOVING. I WAS SCARED IF I STOPPED I WOULD FALL TO PIECES.
I HEARD ON THE RADIO ABOUT A MAN CALLED ***TROY GRENZER***, A ***MULTIPLE KILLER*** WHO REFUSED TO APPEAL AGAINST HIS ***DEATH SENTENCE.***
HEARD PEOPLE TALKING ABOUT HIM AS I MADE MY WAY ***SOUTH*** AGAIN. SOUTH. GOD.
"I'D LIKE TO TRY IT, PERIOD," HE SAID. CAN YOU ***BELIEVE*** IT? HE SAID HE'D LIKE TO SEE WHAT THE ***ELECTRIC CHAIR'S*** ALL ABOUT!
HEARD THEY ALREADY STARTED SHOOTING A ***MOVIE*** 'BOUT HIM.

THEN THE TIME CAME. I DROVE THROUGH THE NIGHT.
THIS MORNING WHEN DAWN BROKE I WAS OUTSIDE THE **LOUISIANA STATE PENITENTIARY**. IT WAS **EXECUTION DAY**. IT STILL **IS,** I GUESS.
I DON'T REALLY KNOW WHY I WAS THERE. I GUESS I WAS FEELING **DESPERATE**. ONE WAY OR ANOTHER I WAS GOING TO **KILL** MYSELF IF **SOMETHING** DIDN'T CHANGE.
MAYBE I THOUGHT IF I WAS THERE WHEN HE DIED HE'D STOP COMING TO ME EVERY NIGHT. HE NEVER MISSED A SINGLE NIGHT.
SO I WAITED. AND I THOUGHT ABOUT A WARM DAY IN LOUISIANA THREE YEARS AGO.
I THOUGHT ABOUT KISSING ROGER, OPENING THE DOOR, SAYING, "MOM, DAD, IT'S ME ...".
AND I SMELLED THE BLOOD AGAIN, AND I IMAGINED.
I IMAGINED HIM WAITING IN HIS CELL.
AND I TRIED TO IMAGINE WHAT, IF ANYTHING, HE WAS **FEELING**.
82365

HEY, WANNA KNOW SOMETHING?
NOPE.
I AIN'T SORRY. I DID WHAT I DID CAUSE I WANTED TO, PERIOD.
MUST BE CLOSE TO THIRTY-FIVE BODIES ACROSS TEXAS AND LOUISIANA I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR. WOMEN MOSTLY. BLACK AND WHITE.
MAYBE IF I'D STUCK WITH BLACKS THEY'D HAVE JUST GIVEN ME LIFE, BUT THAT AIN'T MY WAY, NO SIR.
THE PAPERS AND TEE VEE JUST LOVE ME. CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF ME. LISTEN, IF THEY LET ME OUT TODAY I'D BE RICH TOMORROW.
I COULD HAVE MY OWN TALK SHOW, BE IN MOVIES. EVERYONE'D WANT ME. I'M A STAR. I'M CHARLES MANSON AND JAMES DEAN ROLLED INTO ONE.
I'M AN AMERICAN HERO.
THE OTHERS, THEY TRY FOR THEIR REPRIEVE AND THEY WAKE UP SHRIEKING AND CRYING. BUT ME, I GET A BONER. I SWEAR, I WANT IT.
I GET ALL EXCITED LIKE WHEN YOU'RE GONNA HAVE YOUR FIRST WOMAN, YOU KNOW? THAT'S THE WAY I FEEL ABOUT THE CHAIR. I WANT IT.
GOOD OL' SPARKY, OL' SPARKY SITTING THERE IN THE DARK.
SMILING TO HIMSELF.

"WAITING.
"SITTING THERE WAITING WITH A GRIN ON ITS FACE. OL' SPARKY."
I'VE SEEN IT, SQUATTING THERE LIKE A BIG BLACK INSECT IN THE DARK. THE HOOD LEANING BACK, LIKE IT WAS LAUGHING.
SURE YOU HAVE, TROY.
WE GOTTA SHAVE YOUR HEAD AND LEG NOW, YOU KNOW THAT, DON'T YOU?
SOME MEN GET OFF THINKING ABOUT THE WOMEN THEY'VE HAD, BUT ME, I THINK ABOUT THOSE TIMES. THOSE GOOD TIMES, WHEN I WAS BUZZING.
WHEN I FELT THE ELECTRICITY.
SHUT YOUR MOUTH, GRENZER.
NO, LISTEN, THE LAST TIME I DID IT WAS AT THIS HOUSE. PRETENDED TO BE DELIVERING GROCERIES.
WOMAN OPENED THE DOOR. JUST HER AND HER OLD MAN HOME.
IT WAS A REAL NICE HOUSE, SORT OF OLD-TIME FURNISHINGS AND THAT.
"I TOOK OUT THE MAN FIRST CAUSE HE WAS TROUBLE. STUCK HIM IN THE NECK. THEN I STARTED ON THE WOMAN.
"SHE HAD A LITTLE BIRTHMARK BEHIND HER EAR. REAL CUTE."

I WANNA KNOW WHAT IT'S *LIKE*, WHEN THE *CURRENT* HITS YOU. *DONE* EVERYTHING ELSE. GONE AS FAR AS YOU CAN AND STILL COME BACK.
HEARD OF A *GUY* YEARS BACK WHO *DIDN'T DIE*. THEY HOOKED HIM UP AND PULLED THE SWITCH BUT THE *MOTHER* DIDN'T DIE!
CARRIED HIM BACK TO HIS CELL AND HE *DESCRIBED* IT! HE WENT *THAT FAR* AND CAME BACK AND *TALKED!*
SAID HE FELT A *BURNING* IN HIS HEAD AND HAD A TASTE LIKE *COLD PEANUT BUTTER* IN HIS MOUTH. *COLD PEANUT BUTTER!*
JUST GOTTA RUB THIS IN, TROY. ELECTRICAL CONDUCTING GEL...
WHA? OH, YEAH. DON'T MIND ME.
HE JUMPED AGAINST THE STRAPS WHEN THE *JUICE* HIT HIM. SAW THESE *COLORED SPECKLES* OR SOME SHIT...
NEVER STOPS. TALKS ALLA TIME. EVEN WHEN HE'S *SLEEPING*. THERE'S A *MEDICAL WORD* FOR IT.
YEAH. *SHITBRAIN.*
THEY *BURNED* HIM AGAIN A YEAR LATER. THIS TIME HE DIDN'T COME BACK.
JEEZ, THE *ELECTRIC CHAIR* AND *PEANUT BUTTER*. AMERICAN AS *APPLE PIE*, EH?
I HEARD HOW THE *SKIN BURNS* AND CHANGES COLOR, HOW YOU *SICK BLOOD* AND YOUR *EYEBALLS MELT*. *HEARD* ALL THAT SHIT. DON'T SCARE *ME*.
I'M READY. I'M *WAITING*.
OKAY, TROY. DON'T HAVE TO WAIT NO LONGER.
LET'S WALK.

I AIN'T SCARED OR NOTHING.
COURSE YOU AIN'T, TROY.
COURSE YOU AIN'T.
I IMAGINED IT ALL. THE ELECTRICIAN WOULD SOON BE PLACING **SPONGES** SOAKED IN **AMMONIUM CHLORIDE** SOLUTION ON HIS HEAD.
ELECTRODES WOULD BE ATTACHED TO HIS HEAD AND RIGHT LEG. I'D READ UP ABOUT ELECTROCUTIONS...
TWELVE OFFICIAL WITNESSES WOULD HAVE GATHERED TO WITNESS HIS EXECUTION.
WILL HE BE **SCARED?** I WONDERED.
WILL HE BE **HOWLING?** WILL HIS MIND BE IN A **MILLION PIECES?** OR WILL HE BE TALKING, LAUGHING, **MACHO** TO THE END?
HOW DID MY **PARENTS** DIE?

WAS THERE A MOMENT WHEN THEY **KNEW**, KNEW FOR **SURE**, IT WAS **OVER**?
DID MY MOTHER WATCH AS HE RIPPED OPEN MY FATHER'S THROAT?
DID SHE WATCH, HELPLESS, MAYBE WOUNDED, KNOWING HER **OWN** TURN WAS COMING?
ONLY **TROY GRENZER** KNEW THAT.
AH... HOLD ON A MINUTE. JUST A MINUTE, FELLAS. I JUST WANNA FEW MORE MINUTES...
SORRY, GRENZER. GOT A **SCHEDULE** TO KEEP...
NO, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. I'VE CHANGED MY MIND. I THINK MAYBE I **WILL** TRY FOR A REPRIEVE, MAYBE I'M NOT READY YET FOR...
IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT NOW, TROY!
NO! LET ME GO! **NAAAHHH!**
GET HIS ARM, FLOYD...
GOT IT.
DON'T GET **DIFFICULT** NOW, BOY. AIN'T NO GOOD STRUGGLING...

JESUS HOLD HIS LEGS HOLD HIS LEGS!
OH GOD. PLEASE GOD NO PLEASE I'M SORRY PLEASE
HHHMMNAGHH--
WHAT'S HAPPENING? IS IT WORKING? CAN'T *SMELL* ANYTHING.
DON'T KNOW, SIR. *SOMETHING'S* HAPPENING TO HIM. MAYBE A HITCH WITH THE *GENERATOR*.
JESUS CHRIST! WILL YOU LOOK AT THAT...

I'M OUTTA HERE!
SIR, WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE--
SHIT.
SEVEN A.M. *FRYING TIME.*
I LOOKED AT THE PENITENTIARY. I SENSED SOMETHING WAS *WRONG.*

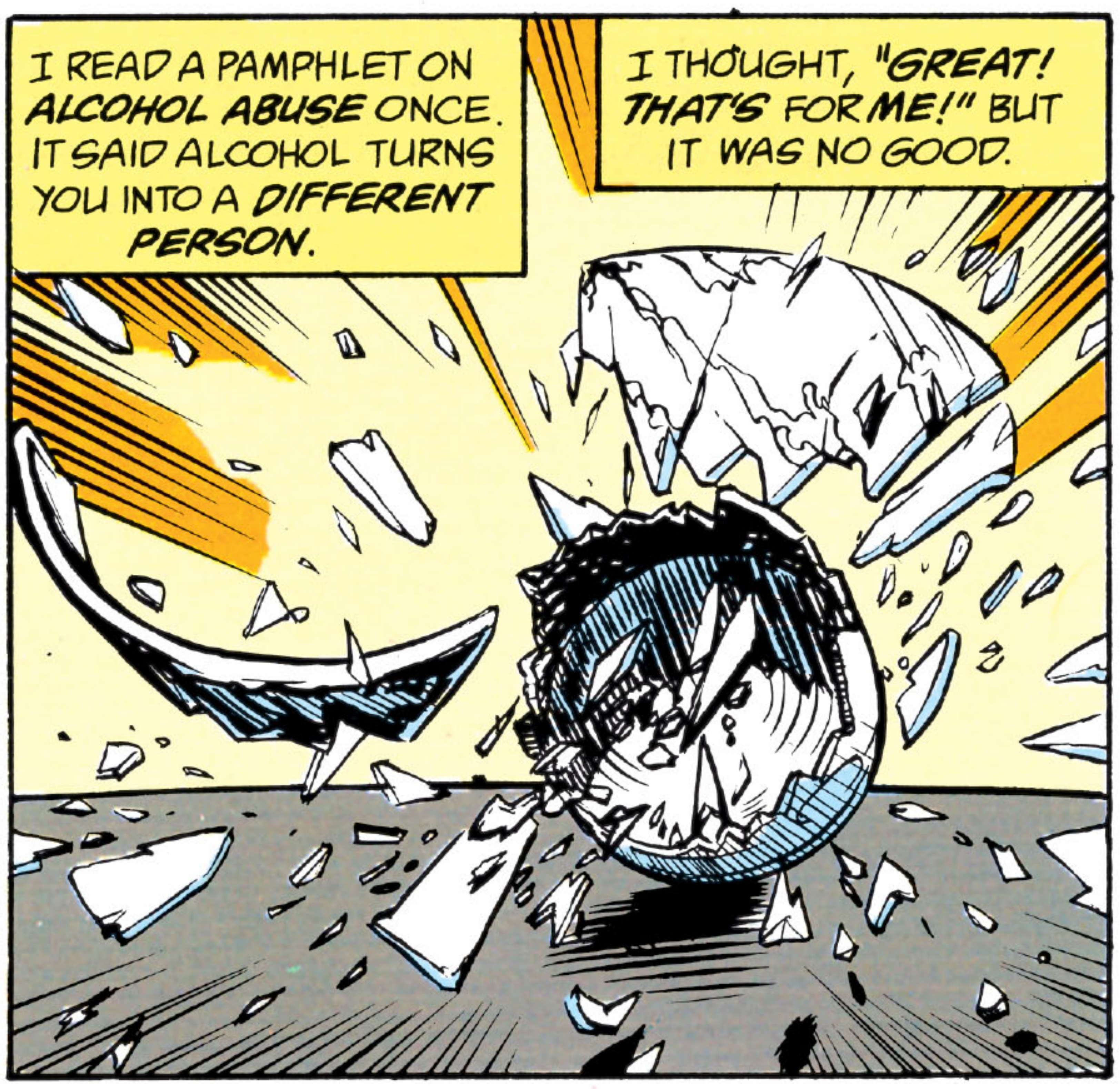
AND THEN THE *SCREAMS* STARTED.
THE SCREAMS. THE SHRIEKS. THE LAUGHTER.
THE *LAUGHTER?*
TIME SPACE REASON SANITY, NO. BUT LAUGHTER?
SURE, THERE WAS LAUGHTER.
THAT *COLD SKELETON LAUGHTER* YOU'VE HEARD SINCE YOU WERE A *KID,* SINCE YOU WERE FIRST *ALONE* IN THE *DARK.*
SINCE YOU FIRST REACHED OUT FOR MOMMY AND *MOMMY* WASN'T *THERE.*

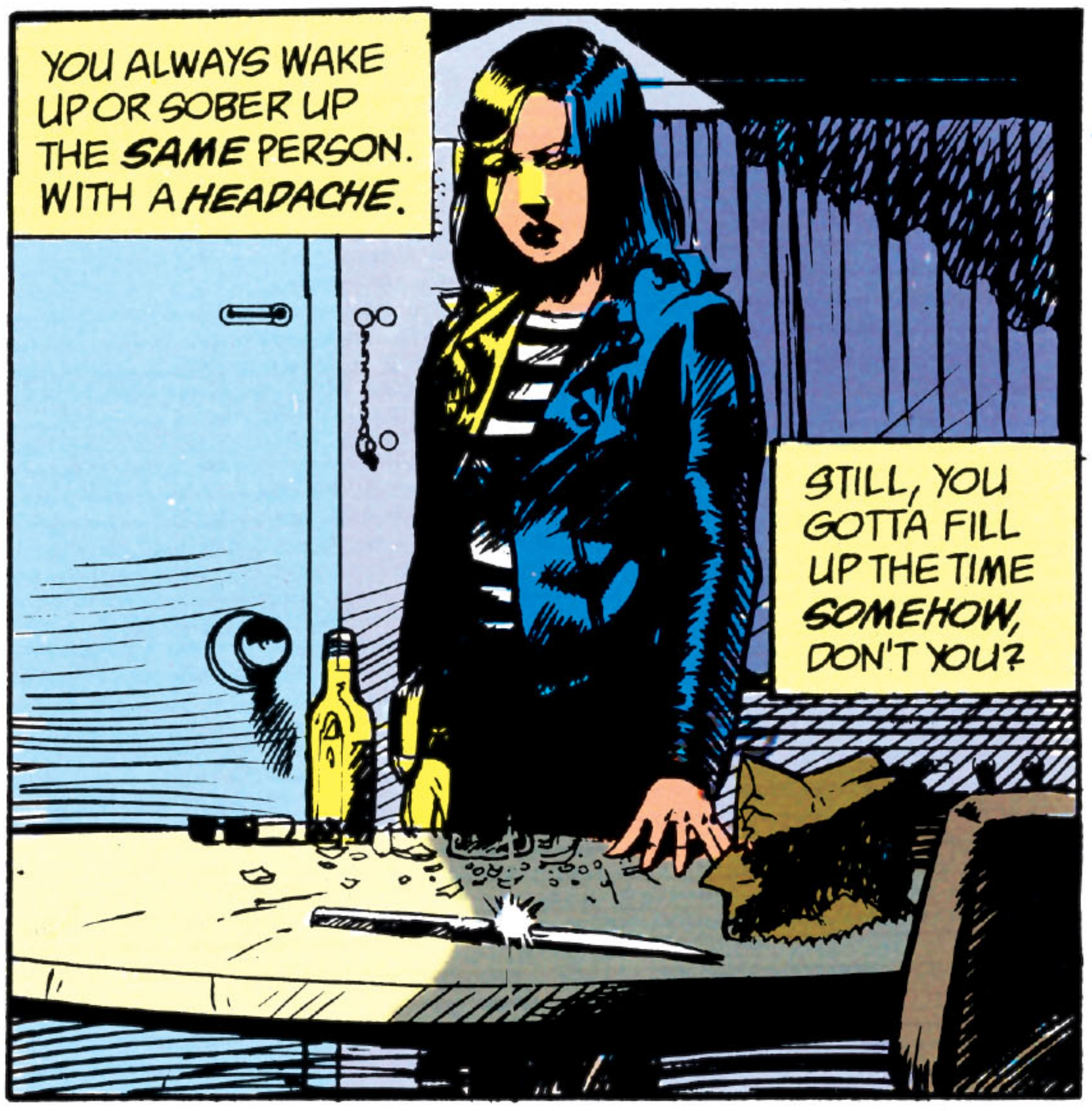
MY *CAR* WAS THERE, THOUGH. ONLY YARDS AWAY. ALL THAT STOOD BETWEEN ME AND MY CAR WAS A *CHAIR*. A SILLY OLD *CHAIR*.
WITH A *HOOD*.
WITH A *HOOD* THAT WAS *GRINNING* AT ME.
OH NO. PLEASE.
NO.
NO!

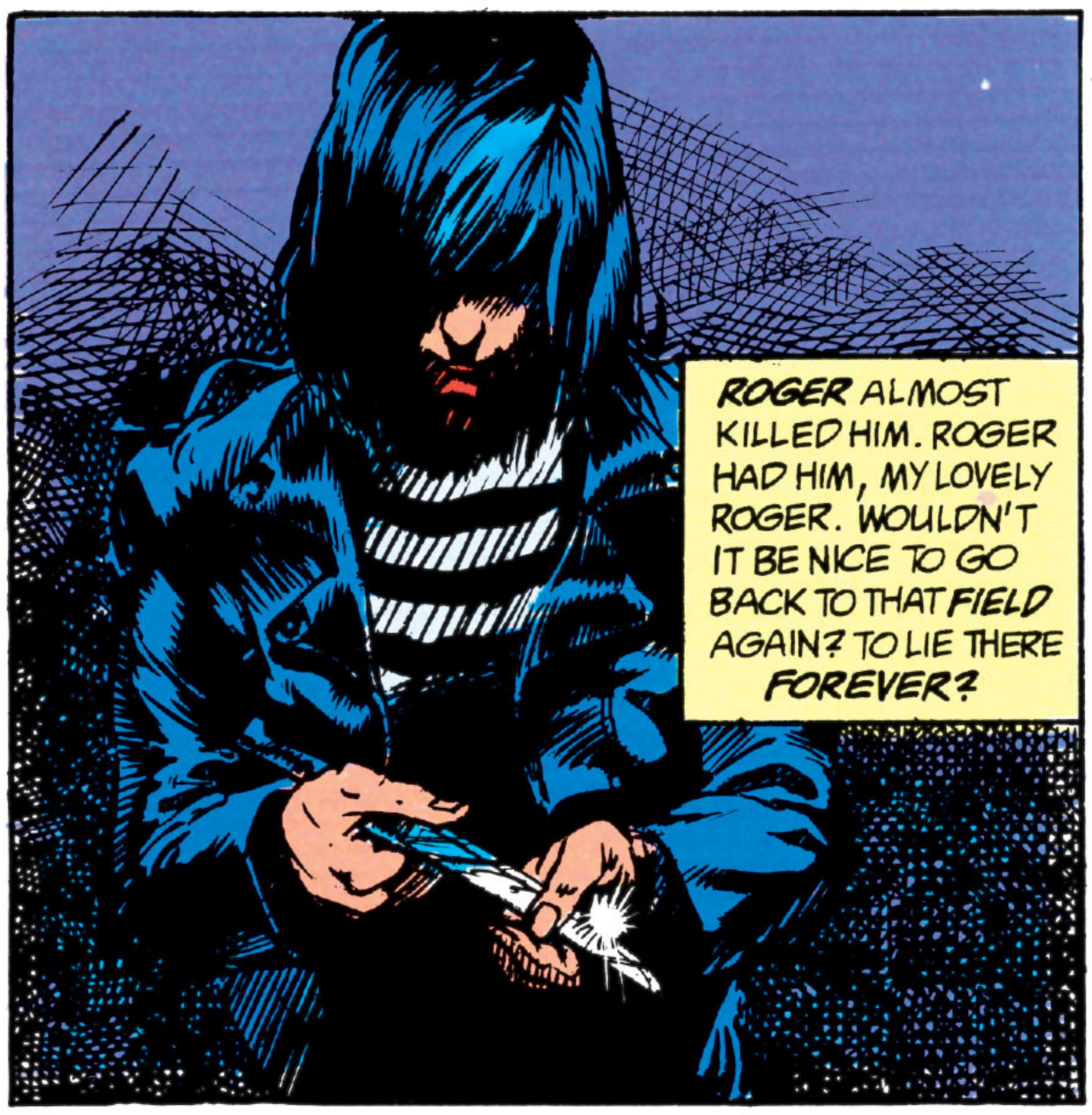
OH GOD NO PLEASE NO I'M SORRY I'M
SORRY...
DRIVE. PLEASE.
YOU MUST DRIVE.
I'M NOT THE PERSON YOU THINK I AM. MY NAME IS SHADE. I'M ONLY USING THIS BODY. I CAUSED A LOCALIZED TRAUMA IN REALITY WHEN I ENTERED IT.
I HOPE IT DIDN'T DISTURB YOU. THIS IS EARTH, RIGHT? I'VE COME FROM THE AREA OF MADNESS. QUITE A JOURNEY.

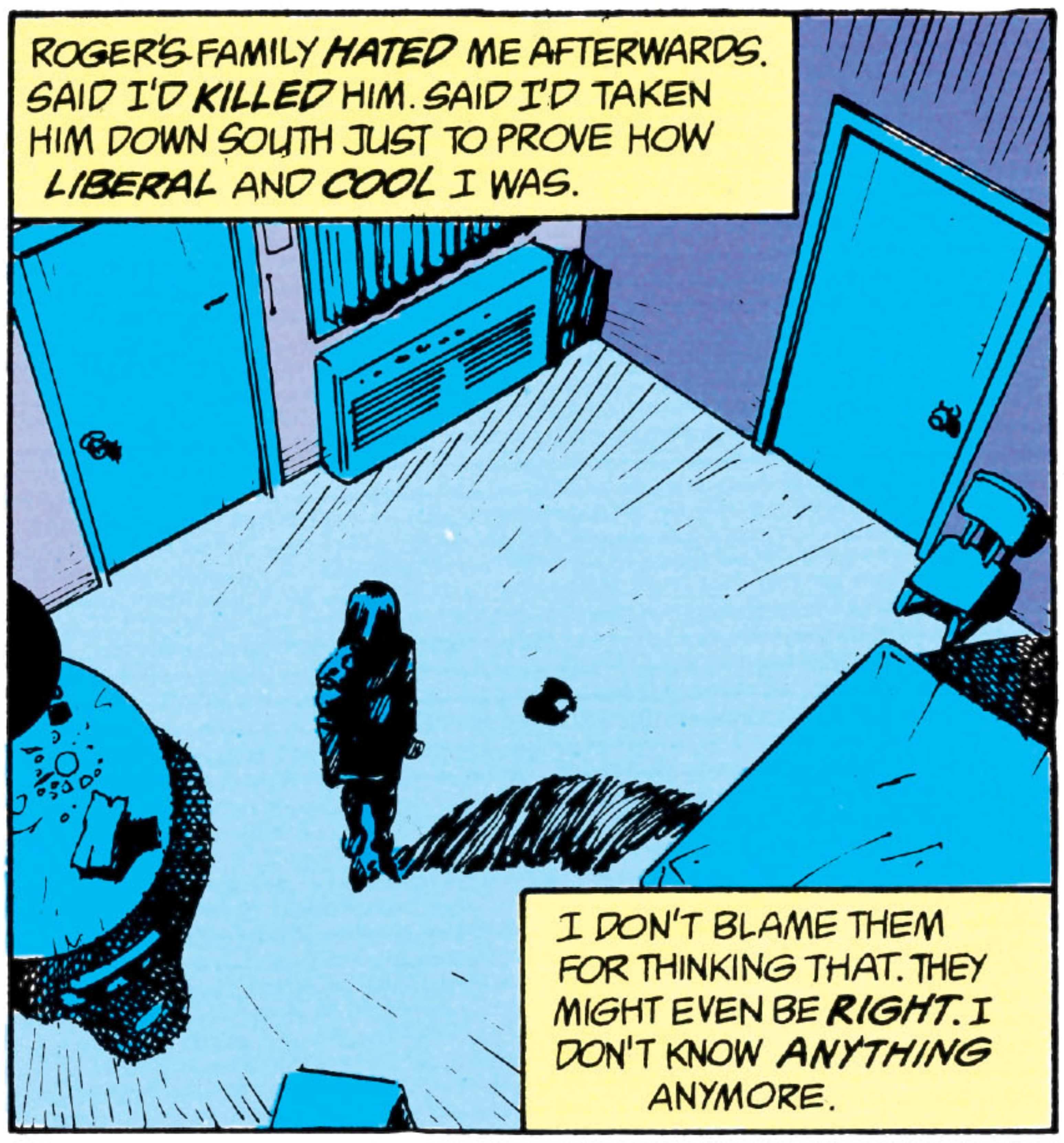
YOU'D BETTER GET GOING.
I'LL TRY TO EXPLAIN EVERYTHING TO YOU LATER, WHEN I'VE WORKED IT OUT **MYSELF**. WHEN I'VE **REMEMBERED** EVERYTHING.
ENTERING THIS BODY HAS MESSED MY MEMORY UP A LITTLE. I'M SORRY.
SO I TURNED ON THE ENGINE, PUT MY FOOT DOWN, DROVE OFF. YES I DID.
I DID ALL THIS WITH SOMEONE IN THE BACK SEAT WHO SAID HE WASN'T THE PERSON WHO HAD KILLED MY PARENTS.
LAUGHTER?
SURE, THERE WAS LAUGHTER.
LAUGHTER THAT SAID, JESUS, KATHY, HOW COME THEY LET **YOU** OUT OF THE **MADHOUSE?**
I COULD SENSE HIM ON THE SEAT BEHIND ME, SENSE HIS EYES CRAWLING THROUGH THE BACK OF MY SKULL.
EVERY NOW AND THEN I TOOK A PEEK IN THE **MIRROR**.
STARING AT ME THE WHOLE TIME. AND I COULDN'T THINK. THERE WAS NOTHING IN MY HEAD. NOTHING EXCEPT **HIM**.
ALL I COULD DO WAS DRIVE. I WAS **EMPTY**. I WAS **NOTHING. NOTHING.**

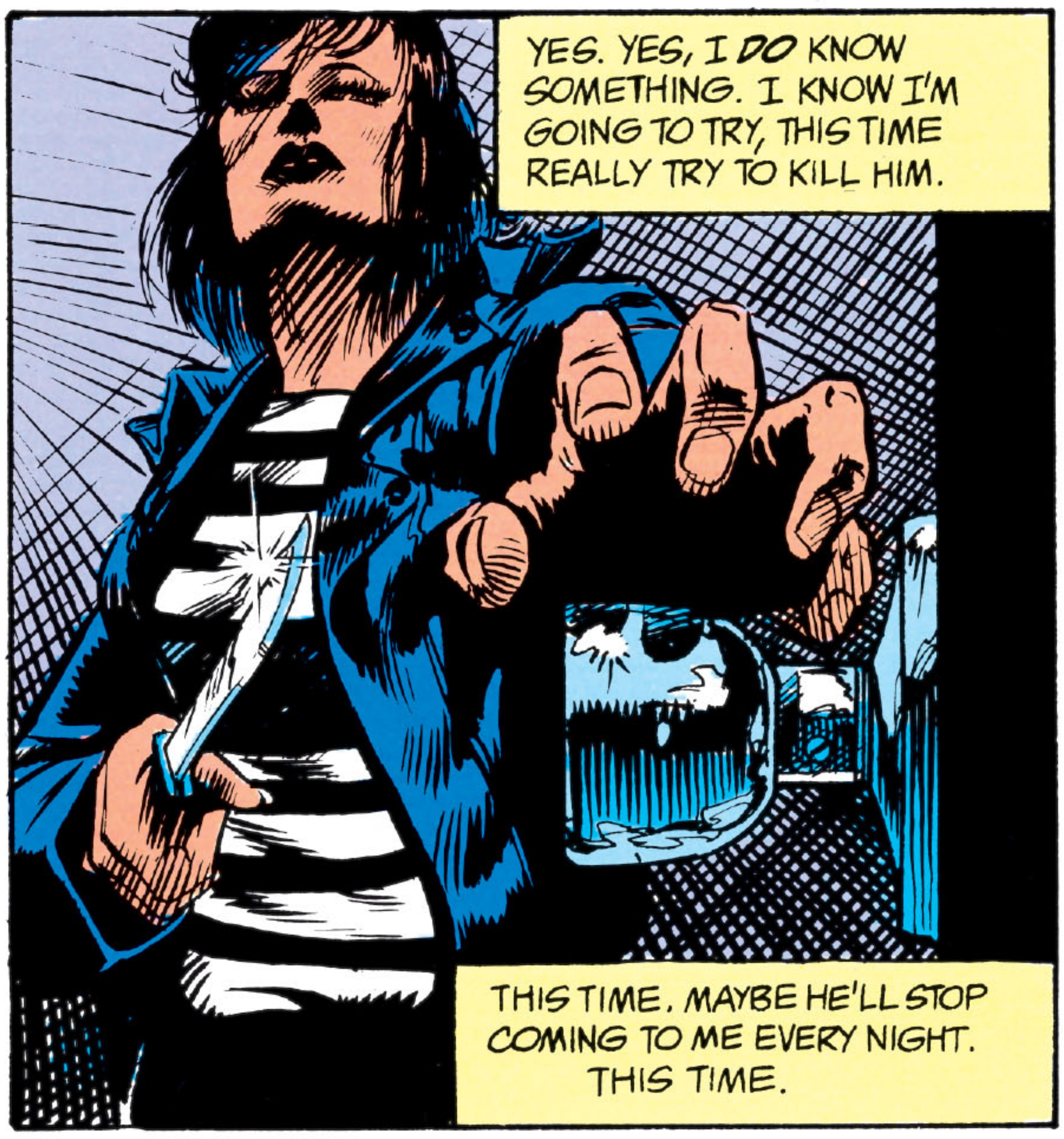
FEW MILES FROM TEXAS I KNOCKED OVER A GUY A FUNNY COSTUME.
MY PASSENGER SAID FORGET IT. IT WAS ONE OF HIS. HE CREATED IT. HE CHANGED A FEW PASSING ATOMS INTO THIS GUY.
HE DIDN'T MEAN TO. IT WAS THE M VEST. THE M VEST WAS FROM THE AREA OF MADNESS TOO. IT WAS THE M VEST THAT MADE HIM DO IT.
THE M VEST. OF COURSE IT WAS.
TEL
WE CROSSED THE STATE LINE AND BOOKED INTO THE REGAL MOTEL.
HE WAS STARTING TO FADE. STARTING TO PASS OUT. AND I WAS STARTING TO FEEL LESS EMPTY AND I WAS STARTING TO THINK AGAIN.
OFFICE
3
I THOUGHT. NO, I KNEW, I KNEW FOR SURE, I WAS GOING TO KILL HIM.
THIS TIME. REALLY KILL HIM. FINALLY KILL HIM.
BUT FIRST I HAD TO GO GET A DRINK.
CAN'T KILL A MAN WITHOUT HAVING A DRINK FIRST, CAN YOU?
3

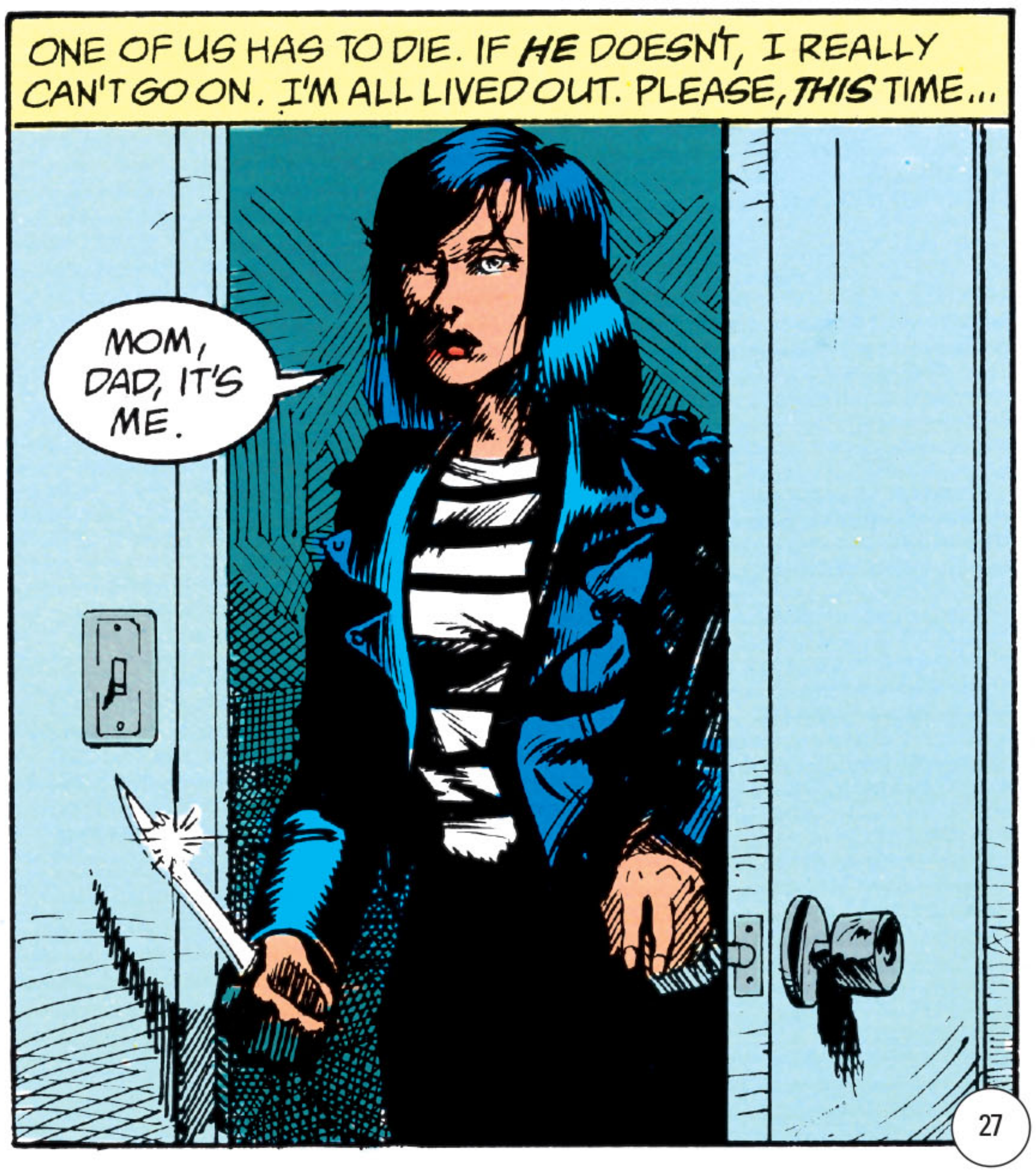

I READ A PAMPHLET ON ALCOHOL ABUSE ONCE. IT SAID ALCOHOL TURNS YOU INTO A DIFFERENT PERSON.
I THOUGHT, "GREAT! THAT'S FOR ME!" BUT IT WAS NO GOOD.


YOU ALWAYS WAKE UP OR SOBER UP THE SAME PERSON. WITH A HEADACHE.
STILL, YOU GOTTA FILL UP THE TIME SOMEHOW, DON'T YOU?


ROGER ALMOST KILLED HIM. ROGER HAD HIM, MY LOVELY ROGER. WOULDN'T IT BE NICE TO GO BACK TO THAT FIELD AGAIN? TO LIE THERE FOREVER?


ROGER'S FAMILY HATED ME AFTERWARDS. SAID I'D KILLED HIM. SAID I'D TAKEN HIM DOWN SOUTH JUST TO PROVE HOW LIBERAL AND COOL I WAS.
I DON'T BLAME THEM FOR THINKING THAT. THEY MIGHT EVEN BE RIGHT. I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ANYMORE.


YES. YES, I DO KNOW SOMETHING. I KNOW I'M GOING TO TRY, THIS TIME REALLY TRY TO KILL HIM.
THIS TIME. MAYBE HE'LL STOP COMING TO ME EVERY NIGHT. THIS TIME.


ONE OF US HAS TO DIE. IF HE DOESN'T, I REALLY CAN'T GO ON. I'M ALL LIVED OUT. PLEASE, THIS TIME...
MOM, DAD, IT'S ME.

I'M RICHARD CONLON, STUDENT AT FARMHOUSE MENTAL HOSPITAL. IT STARTED A FEW HOURS AGO. STARTED SCREAMING.
I HOPE... I HOPE SOMEONE FINDS THIS TAPE AND CAN STOP... CAN STOP WHATEVER IT IS THAT'S ARRIVED HERE.
CAN YOU HEAR THE SCREAMS? LOUDER NOW. IT WON'T BE LONG, WHOLE PLACE IS GOING TO EXPLODE.
THE WALLS SHOOK WITH THE SCREAMING. WE ALL KNEW SOMETHING WAS GOING TO HAPPEN. CAN'T EXPLAIN HOW, JUST KNEW.
"HAIR STOOD UP ALL OVER, SPINE TINGLED, FELT LIKE AN ANIMAL. IT'S THE MADNESS. YEAH, THE MADNESS IS ESCAPING.
"ALL THE MADNESS LOCKED UP IN THIS PLACE, IT'S GOING TO BLOW.
"REACHING CRITICAL MASS, CRITICAL MASS HYSTERIA, HAH HAH, CAN STILL JOKE. MAY AS WELL JOKE NOW.
I ASKED ONE OF THE PATIENTS WHAT WAS HAPPENING. SHE SAID THE SCREAM HAD ARRIVED.
THE SCREAM THAT'S INSIDE ME, YOU, ALL OF US. THE SCREAM THAT'S INSIDE AMERICA.
HE'S COME TO SET IT FREE.
HE'S THE AMERICAN SCREAM.
YOU NEED A SENSE OF HUMOR WHEN YOUR LEGS HAVE TURNED INTO WORMS.
YES, WORMS. I CAN FEEL THEM SQUIRMING BENEATH ME...

HE'S COME FROM THE **AREA OF MADNESS**. SOMEONE CALLED **SHADE** HAS COME FROM THERE TOO.
IT'S **TOO LATE**, SEE. HE'S HERE. THE **AMERICAN SCREAM'S**, GONNA SPREAD ALL OVER THE COUNTRY.
IT'S TOO LATE. FOR ME NOW.
MY BELLY... TURNED INTO A **BED OF FLOWERS**. THE FLOWERS ARE **GROWING**. MY **GRANDPA'S GARDEN**. YEARS AGO, I KILLED HIS LITTLE **PET BIRD** AND...
THE **MORPHINE**, THANK GOD FOR THE **MORPHINE**. I'M THE LAST OF THE STAFF. THE SCREAM IS GETTING **LOUDER**, PITCH **HIGHER**...
WHOLE PLACE IS GONNA **BLOW**. I THINK THE IDEA IS THAT WHATEVER'S HAPPENED HERE WILL BE **SPREAD**, LIKE **RADIATION**. IF YOU FIND THIS TAPE, TAKE IT TO SOMEONE...
SOMEONE WHO CAN STOP IT, SOMEONE WHO CAN STOP THE AMERICAN SCREAM...
OH **JEEESSS**...
KRKKKK

NEWS
AMERICA
NO FURTHER NEWS FROM LOUISIANA, WHERE THE AREA SURROUNDING THE STATE PENITENTIARY IS NOW A NO GO ZONE FOLLOWING AN AS YET UNSPECIFIED CHEMICAL EXPLOSION.
2
AUTHORITIES DENY A CHERNOBYL-STYLE RADIOACTIVE DISASTER BUT APPEAL TO THE PUBLIC TO ASSIST THEM IN PREVENTING MOVEMENT TO AND FROM THE RESTRICTED ZONE.
IF YOU WERE IN THE VICINITY DURING THE TIME OF THE EXPLOSION, IT'S IMPERATIVE THAT YOU REPORT IMMEDIATELY TO THE AUTHORITIES.
2
YOU ARE ALSO ASKED TO CONTACT YOUR LOCAL POLICE IF YOU HAVE INFORMATION THAT MAY HELP TO TRACE PEOPLE THAT WERE IN THE VICINITY.
IT'S FOR THEIR OWN GOOD. THEY MAY BE SERIOUSLY ILL OR EVEN DANGEROUS.
TODAY WAS ALSO THE SCHEDULED DAY OF EXECUTION OF MULTIPLE KILLER TROY GRENZER.
AUTHORITIES REFUSE TO SAY WHETHER TODAY'S EXPLOSION PREVENTED THE EXECUTION...
...BUT DENY THAT THE TWO ARE IN ANY WAY CONNECTED...
HELLO? IS THIS THE POLICE? THIS IS THE REGAL MOTEL...

JESUS, GET THIS, MR. STRINGER, ALL STATEMENTS PRETTY WELL MATCH UP. THE FUNNY GLOW, THE COOL ORANGE EXPLOSION...
THE SECOND BODY SUPERIMPOSED OVER GRENZER, A TRANSLUCENT MAN IN A KIND OF SCIENCE FICTION OUTFIT...
IT'S UNBELIEVABLE.
HMM. LET'S SEE. GRENZER DOESN'T BREAK THE STRAPS, HE LEVITATES THROUGH THEM. AND BY THE TIME ANYONE THINKS TO LOOK, HE'S GONE. ANY BREATHTAKING THEORIES YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE WITH ME, MR. CONNER?
ERR, IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN MASS HALLUCINATION.
UNLESS IT WAS ON A REALLY GRAND SCALE...
YOU MEAN LIKE U.F.O.'S WEEPING MADONNAS, INDIAN ROPE TRICKS, HAPPY MARRIAGES.
BUT THIS STUFF WAS REAL. ONE GUY BROKE HIS LEG RUNNING INTO A WALKING ELECTRIC CHAIR, WHICH THEN DISAPPEARED
REMINDS ME, WHEN ARE WE GOING TO LET THEM GO? CAN'T KEEP HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE LOCKED UP INDEFINITELY. GOT FAMILIES THAT'RE WORRIED AND...
WE CAN DO WHAT WE LIKE, MR. CONNER.
MAYBE WE'LL SHOOT THEM ALL TO KEEP THEM QUIET, SAY THEY WERE KILLED IN THE EXPLOSION.
ONLY JOKING, CONNER. THIS IS AMERICA. WE DON'T DO THINGS LIKE THAT.
BEEP BEEP BEEP
⸗FZZTTT⸗ AH, MR. STRINGER, GREAVES HERE.
I THINK YOU'D BETTER COME SEE WHAT WE'VE FOUND.

SOME HIGHWAY BOYS PICKED HIM UP WEST OF HERE. WE SCARED THE SHIT OUT OF THEM. THEY'LL KEEP THEIR MOUTHS SHUT.
IS HE DEAD?
IS HE **HUMAN,** FOR CHRISSAKES?
SEEMS DEAD. SEEMS HUMAN ENOUGH, TOO. BUT... WELL, HE'S JUST A BIT ***LIGHT,*** YOU KNOW? LIKE HE HAD ***COTTON CANDY*** FOR GUTS. TOUCH HIM.
JESUS HE'S ***SOFT.*** LIKE ***PUTTY.***
AND MY FINGERS. THEY'RE ***TINGLING.***
YOUR ***OPINION,*** MR. GREAVES?
CHRIST KNOWS. MAYBE THE WHOLE WORLD'S JUST GONE ***CRAZY.***
BEST THEORY I'VE HEARD ALL DAY.
MR. STRINGER, SIR... GETTING SOMETHING ABOUT ANOTHER ***EXPLOSION.*** SOMETHING ABOUT ***FARM-HOUSE...*** FARMHOUSE MENTAL HOSPITAL...

THIS TIME, GRENZER...
NO, NOT GRENZER. I TOLD YOU. IT'S SHADE. MY NAME IS SHADE!
I'M ONLY USING THIS BODY. MY REAL BODY'S IN THE AREA OF MADNESS. BETWEEN EARTH AND MY OWN PLANET, META.
META...
IT'LL ALL COME BACK. THE M VEST. THAT'S IN THE AREA TOO, BUT BECAUSE IT'S PART OF MY SOULFORCE, NOW, IT'S WITH ME ON EARTH.
SEE? WHERE THE MARKS OF THE ELECTRIC CHAIR STRAPS ARE ON THIS BODY, THE M VEST IS ON MY REAL BODY. IT'S PART OF ME, EVEN HERE.
WE'RE PART OF EACH OTHER. SYMBIOTIC. YES. SYMBIOTIC.
THE M STANDS FOR... YES, FOR MADNESS, MY MADNESS VEST.
IT CHANGES ATOMS, REARRANGES THEM, TURNS A THOUGHT INTO A SOLID OBJECT...
REMEMBER THAT MAN YOU HIT WITH YOUR CAR? ONE OF MINE. EVEN MY SUBCONSCIOUS CAN HARNESS THE POWER OF THE M VEST.
IT'LL ALL COME BACK. THE VEST CONTAINS ALL THE ANSWERS. I HAVE TO LEARN TO CONTACT IT. HAVE TO LEARN TO CONTROL IT.

ENTERING GRENZER'S BODY SCRAMBLED MY MIND, BUT I'M STARTING TO **REMEMBER**. I'VE COME HERE TO **FIGHT** SOMETHING.
SOMETHING THAT'S COME FROM THE **AREA OF MADNESS** TOO. MAYBE **MADNESS** ITSELF.
I'LL USE MY **M VEST** TO FIGHT IT. FIGHT **MADNESS** WITH **MADNESS**.
THIS TIME, GRENZER.
I TOLD YOU, I'M NOT GRENZER.
I KILLED **GRENZER** WHEN I ENTERED HIM. THAT'S WHY I **CHOSE** HIM. HE WAS GOING TO DIE ANYHOW.
THOUGH I THINK SOME **RESIDUE** OF HIS **PERSONALITY** MAY HAVE **SURVIVED**. IT'S VERY STRANGE, LIKE AN ECHO OF SOMEONE ELSE, BUBBLING BENEATH YOU...
I KEEP HEARING A PHRASE. **COLD PEANUT BUTTER**. DOES THAT MEAN ANYTHING TO --
THIS TIME, GRENZER.
NO, I'M TOO **WEAK** TO FIGHT. I'M **SHADE**. I'M FROM A PLANET CALLED META. I'M NOT GRENZER.
JUST THINK. **THINK**.
HOW COULD **GRENZER** HAVE **ESCAPED**? HOW COULD HE HAVE CREATED THAT **EXPLOSION**?
THE **STRANGE PEOPLE** OUTSIDE. ALL THE EFFECTS OF THE **MADNESS VEST**...

THAT'S ME. THAT'S MY CRAZINESS. THEY SAID I WAS CRAZY.
ALL I KNOW IS YOU'RE HERE. A SECOND CHANCE. I DIDN'T HELP MOM AND DAD FIRST TIME ROUND...
THIS TIME--
KATHY?
oh...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, KATHY?
mom... oh god... mom... dad...

OH GOD... I'M SORRY. I'M SORRY.
IT'S ALL RIGHT, DEAR. IT'S ALL RIGHT.
NO, I'M SO SORRY. I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO DIE...
REALLY I DIDN'T...
WHO SAID YOU WANTED THEM TO DIE? DRAGGED ME HALFWAY ACROSS THE COUNTRY JUST TO SEE THEM. DON'T DO THAT FOR PEOPLE YOU WANT DEAD.
ROGER...
OH ROGER, I SHOULDN'T HAVE TAKEN YOU. IT'S STILL THE SOUTH, THEY SAID, IT'S STILL...
I...
WANNA KNOW WHY I DO IT?
CAUSE I **WANT** TO.
PERIOD.

MY GOD. MY GOD, I'M BLEEDING. HE'S REAL.
GRENZER, DO--
NOT GRENZER. SHADE.
OKAY SHADE, JUST DO SOMETHING!
I DON'T KNOW HOW. I HAVEN'T LEARNED TO CONTROL THE VEST YET.
IT'S GOT A MIND OF ITS OWN. THE VEST IS CREATING ALL THIS. TAPPING INTO PARTS OF ME THAT ARE STILL GRENZER. I THINK IT'S USING SOME OF YOUR THOUGHTS, TOO.
IT'S TOO SOON. THE MADNESS VEST IS OUT OF CONTROL.
STAY AWAY FROM ME, YOU HEAR? STAY--
BULLSHIT.
LEMME SHOW YOU WHAT I DID TO YOUR MOMMA...

I AM THE VEST. THE VEST IS ME. WE'RE PART OF EACH OTHER
CONCENTRATE. MAKE CONTACT.
USE YOUR IMAGINATION...
OH JESUS HELP ME...
HE AIN'T GONNA HELP YOU. DIDN'T HELP YOUR MOM OR PA NONE, DID HE?
MAYBE HE DON'T LIKE YOU FOR WHAT YOU DID WITH THAT BLACK BOY...
NO!
GO TO HELL YOU BASTARD YOU BASTARD I'M GONNA KILL YOU --

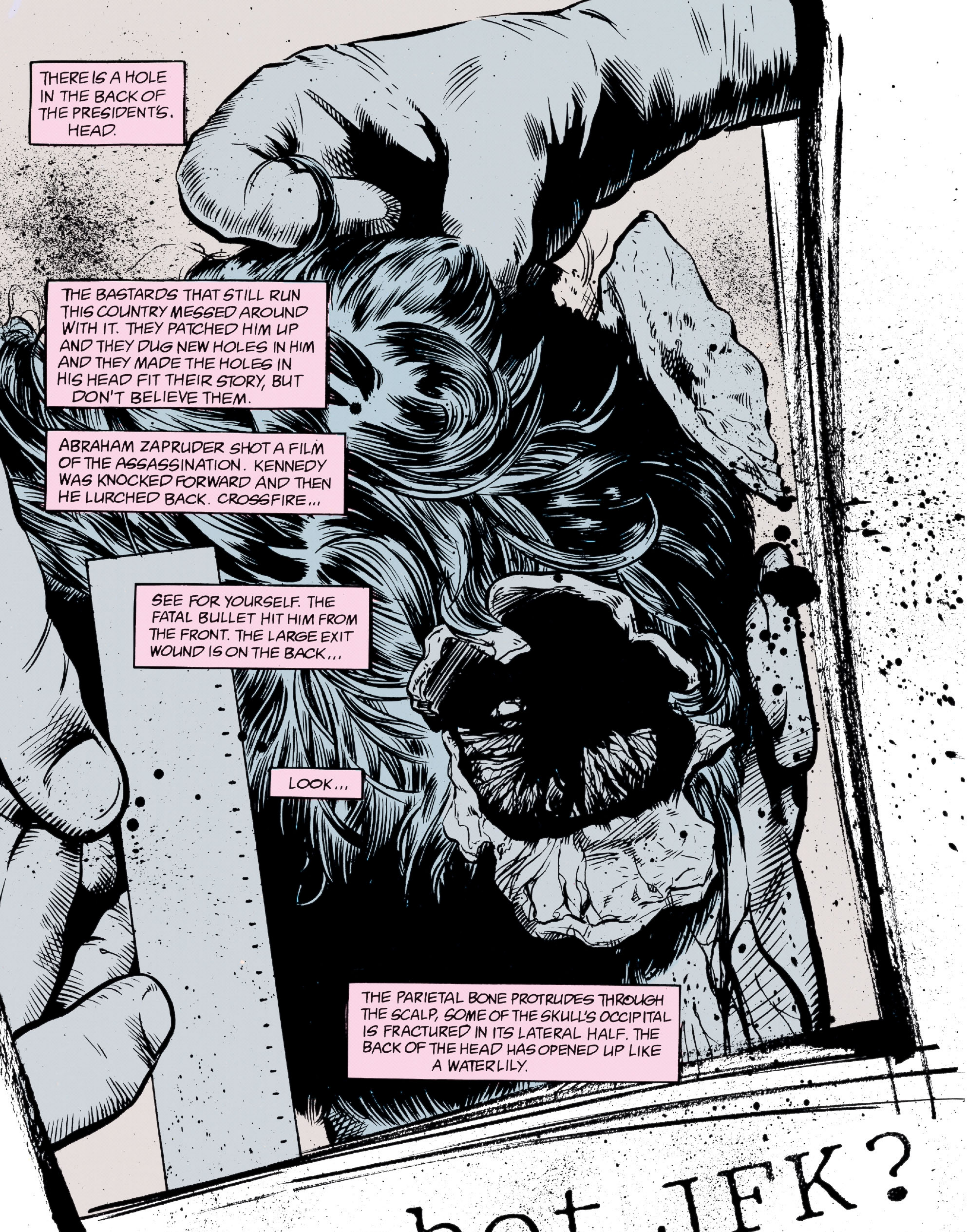
THIS TIME!
THIS TIME...
...YOU'RE GOING TO *DIE!*
AND *STAY* DEAD!
OH GOD... SHADE... I'VE KILLED HIM... I THINK I'VE FINALLY *KILLED* HIM...
SHADE?

MY GOD...

IT'S GOING TO BE HARD. BUT WE'RE *TOGETHER* NOW. LIKE THE VEST AND ME. *TOGETHER*. YOU CAN'T GO BACK, THE *AUTHORITIES* WOULD--
DON'T WORRY. I'VE GOT NOTHING TO GO BACK TO, ANYWAY.
EXCUSE US, FOLKS, WE'RE JUST--
SHIT, FLOYD, IT'S *HIM!* THAT *KILLER... GRENZER...*
O-OKAY, STAY WHERE YOU ARE, GRENZER, ONE TWITCH AND YOU'RE *DOGMEAT...*
C-CALL IN, FLOYD, WE'RE GONNA BE *FAMOUS!*

NEVER SEEN A COP FAINT BEFORE. BUT I GUESS THEY'D NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE YOU, SHADE.
SHADE?
I SEE, YOU SLEEP WHILE I DO ALL THE DRIVING. FINE TRAVELING COMPANION YOU TURNED OUT TO BE.
IF I HAD ANY SENSE, I'D KICK YOU OUT...
BUT WHERE WOULD I GO? WHAT WOULD I DO?
I FINALLY KILLED GRENZER. THIS MIGHT BE CRAZY, BUT IS IT ANY WORSE THAN IT WAS BEFORE?
AND WHO'S TO SAY WHAT IS AND ISN'T CRAZY, NOW THAT THIS MADNESS BUG HAS ARRIVED.
SHADE SAID ALL THE MADNESS INSIDE PEOPLE'S HEADS WILL BE RELEASED, MADE REAL.
THE SKY LOOKS REALLY WEIRD TODAY. THE COLORS LOOK WRONG. THE CLOUDS LOOK WRONG. *EVERYTHING* LOOKS WRONG.
WELCOME TO THE MADHOUSE.

mccarthyism


THERE IS A HOLE IN THE BACK OF THE PRESIDENT'S. HEAD.
THE BASTARDS THAT STILL RUN THIS COUNTRY MESSED AROUND WITH IT. THEY PATCHED HIM UP AND THEY DUG NEW HOLES IN HIM AND THEY MADE THE HOLES IN HIS HEAD FIT THEIR STORY, BUT DON'T BELIEVE THEM.
ABRAHAM ZAPRUDER SHOT A FILM OF THE ASSASSINATION. KENNEDY WAS KNOCKED FORWARD AND THEN HE LURCHED BACK. CROSSFIRE...
SEE FOR YOURSELF. THE FATAL BULLET HIT HIM FROM THE FRONT. THE LARGE EXIT WOUND IS ON THE BACK...
LOOK...
THE PARIETAL BONE PROTRUDES THROUGH THE SCALP, SOME OF THE SKULL'S OCCIPITAL IS FRACTURED IN ITS LATERAL HALF. THE BACK OF THE HEAD HAS OPENED UP LIKE A WATERLILY.

Who shot JFK?

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"MR. KENNEDY, YOU CAN'T SAY DALLAS DOESN'T LOVE YOU,"
SAID GOVERNOR CONNALLY'S WIFE, AS THE OPEN LIMOUSINE MOVED TOWARDS **DEALEY PLAZA**, PASSED THE **TEXAS SCHOOL BOOK DEPOSITORY**, BENEATH THE **SNIPER'S PERCH** ON THE SIXTH FLOOR...
REMEMBER, IT'S PART OF US **ALL** NOW. IT'S **REAL**. IT'S **TELEVISION**.
THE **HALO** OF **BRAIN** AND **BONE** ABOVE JACK'S SPASTIC HEAD.
THERE'S A HOLE IN THE BACK OF THE PRESIDENT'S HEAD, THROUGH WHICH THE **HEART** AND **SOUL** OF AMERICA HAS SLOWLY TRICKLED FOR NEARLY THIRTY YEARS.
AND IT'S **STILL** TRICKLING.
STILL OOZING OUT ITS CLOTS OF **SLIMY HOPE** AND **INNOCENCE**. HE WAS THE GREAT AMERICAN MARTYR. WITNESS TO THE **NEW AGE**.
HE WAS **KENNEDY**, FIRST PRESIDENT TO BE BORN THIS CENTURY. JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY.
HE **HAD** TO BE KILLED, DON'T YOU SEE?

HE HAD TO BE ASSASSINATED, HAD TO BE DEAD BEFORE HE COULD BE A SYMBOL.
ALIVE HE WAS TOO HUMAN TO BE A SYMBOL, OR AT LEAST TO REMAIN A SYMBOL.
KENNEDY FOR PRESIDENT
KENNEDY
KENNEDY FOR PRESIDENT
FIASCO AT THE BAY OF PIGS, VIETNAM, SCREWING THAT MOB BOSS'S LADY IN THE WHITE HOUSE.
HAND UP MARILYN MONROE'S SKIRT. HOW COULD YOU?
YOU SAYING YOU WOULDN'T DO THAT IF YOU HAD THE CHANCE? WITH MARILYN?
ANYWAY, YOU CAN'T BE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES AND INNOCENT. CONTRADICTION IN TERMS.
THAT'S NOT THE POINT, JACK. NOT THE POINT AT ALL. SYMBOLS OF HOPE AND FREEDOM AND CHANGE JUST DON'T DO THAT SORT OF THING.
KENNEDY FOR PRESID
SYMBOLS SHOULD STAND FOR SOMETHING, THEN BEFORE THEY FALL OVER THEY SHOULD BUTT OUT, LEAVE AN EMPTY SPACE...
...THAT WE CAN FILL WITH THE MESSY SHAMBLES OF OUR DREAMS.
YOUR TEETH WILL ALWAYS BE PERFECT AND WHITE, YOUR YOUNG WIFE WILL ALWAYS BE PERFECT AND BEAUTIFUL (WE DON'T WANT TO THINK ABOUT HER AND THAT GREEK SLIMEBALL, THAT'S ANOTHER WOMAN).
YOUR EYES WILL ALWAYS BE SQUINTING OUT FROM YOUR HANDSOME FACE, JACK...
SQUINTING TOWARDS A PLACE WHERE ONLY YOU CAN LEAD US.

WHO ARE YOU ANYHOW, MISTER?
DUANE TRILBY, MISTER PRESIDENT. I'M GONNA WRITE THE DEFINITIVE ASSASSINATION BOOK, "WHO KILLED JOHN F. KENNEDY?"
IF THOSE BASTARD PUBLISHERS HAD GIVEN ME A BREAK I'D HAVE FINISHED IT YEARS AGO. MAYBE THE C.I.A. ARE LEANING ON THEM, TRYING TO BLOCK MY EXPOSÉ...
COME HERE, TRILBY. I WANT TO ASK YOU SOMETHING...
WHO KILLED ME? WHO KILLED J.F.K.?
WHAAAA...THAT'S COMPLICATED, JACK. ONE THING FOR SURE, IT WASN'T JUST LEE HARVEY OSWALD.
THEN IT WAS YOU, DUANE.
YOU KILLED ME.
NAHHHHH!
THE FLASH OF PHOTOGRAPHER'S BULBS AND TELEVISION LIGHTS, THEIR VOICES, HERE HE COMES, HERE HE COMES.
LEE, DID YOU KILL PRESIDENT KENNEDY?
NO! I DIDN'T KILL KENNEDY! I'M NOT OSWALD...
A FIGURE LEAPS FORWARD, BOOT-LEGGING A PISTOL, SEE EVERYTHING, OSWALD FLANKED BY THE PLAIN-CLOTHES MEN, BRUISE OVER ONE EYE.
JACK RUBY PULLING THE TRIGGER.
NAAHHHH!
OSWALD HAS BEEN SHOT.
LEE HARVEY OSWALD HAS BEEN
A SHOOTING HERE AT THE POLICE AND COURTS BUILDING

NAHHHHH!
OH GOD. DREAM. A DREAM. ANOTHER DREAM.
KENNEDY. OSWALD. RUBY. I'M GOING TO PIECES. FALLING APART AT THE GODDAMN SEAMS.
THINK... OSWALD WASN'T OUT OF BREATH WHEN THE POLICEMAN SAW HIM ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE BOOK DEPOSITORY.
ONE AND A HALF MINUTES AFTER THE SHOOTING. ONE AND A HALF MINUTES TO CLEAR UP AND GET FROM THE SIXTH TO THE SECOND FLOOR...
SHIT! FORGET IT FOR ONE MINUTE, CAN'T YOU? GOTTA EAT. GET SOME LUNCH...
OSWALD SAID HE WAS GOING TO LUNCH, JUST FIFTEEN MINUTES BEFORE THE PRESIDENT...
NO! GET OUT OF MY HEAD! I DON'T CARE WHO KILLED YOU. WHO KILLED ME, EH? WHO KILLED MY DAUGHTER? WHO KILLED MY LIFE?
DO YOU CARE ABOUT THAT? HUH? MISTER ICH BIN EIN BERLINER KENNEDY? WHAT DO YOU CARE ABOUT ME?
OH... OH GOD...
WHO...?
I'M YOU, DUANE. AT LEAST, I'M THE YOU YOU REALLY ARE...

YOU, WITHOUT THE CHAINS OF REASON OR CONSENSUS REALITY. THEY'RE GOING TO CALL ME THE AMERICAN SCREAM.
I'M PART OF ALL OF YOU NOW. WE'RE ALL GOING ON A LONG RIDE TOGETHER. A RIDE ACROSS THE MENTAL STATES OF AMERICA...
I'M YOUR LIBERATED DREAMS, BABY. YOUR LIBERATED DREAMS AND YOUR UNFETTERED SCREAMS...
NO! I DON'T WANT MY DREAMS TO BE LIBERATED...
...OUR DREAMS ARE TOO TERRIBLE TO BE LIBERATED!
MR. KENNEDY, YOU CAN'T SAY DALLAS DOESN'T LOVE YOU...
OH GOD... PLEASE DON'T...
...PLEASE DON'T LET THIS BE HAPPENING FOR REAL...
'S UNREAL, SHADE. NEVER SEEN A SKY LIKE IT.
IT'S THE MADNESS, ISN'T IT? MAKING THE SKY LOOK LIKE THAT.
JUST LIKE POLLUTION. MENTAL POLLUTION. ALL THE SHIT INSIDE PEOPLE'S HEADS, SPILLING OUT...
MAYBE. I DON'T KNOW MUCH MORE THAN YOU, KATHY. I'M MAKING THIS UP AS I GO ALONG.
ALL I KNOW FOR SURE IS, I'VE GOT TO FOLLOW THE MADNESS. I'VE GOT TO FIGHT IT.

WHY? WHY YOU? WHO SAYS YOU'VE GOTTA BE A CROSS BETWEEN JOHN WAYNE AND SUPERMAN?
YOU SAY YOU'RE FROM THE PLANET META, BUT YOU CAN'T REMEMBER IT. YOU SAY YOUR REAL BODY'S IN THE AREA OF MADNESS... ...THAT IT'S WEARING A VEST THAT'S LINKING YOU TO THE MADNESS...
WHAT'S ALL THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN, EH? OR AM I CRAZY TO EVEN THINK ABOUT IT?
I DON'T KNOW. I ONLY REMEMBER FLASHES, GLIMPSES...
I JUST KNOW I'VE GOT TO FIGHT THE MADNESS. ALL THE ANSWERS ARE IN THE MADNESS. WHERE I'VE COME FROM, WHY I'M HERE, WHO I AM...
SKRRRR!
WHAT YOU TRYING TO DO? KILL US?
TROUBLE, SHADE.
I'VE A JACK UNDER MY SEAT...
"...BUT I DON'T THINK IT'LL BE ENOUGH..."
HERE. YOU'RE A CONVICTED MULTIPLE KILLER CALLED TROY GRENZER. REMEMBER, YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN EXECUTED YESTERDAY.
YOU MEAN I'M IN HIS BODY. I'VE NEVER KILLED ANYONE.
PUT THE JACK AWAY. KEEP DRIVING.

"I THINK I CAN MAKE THE MADNESS VEST CHANGE MY APPEARANCE FOR LONG ENOUGH."
"I HOPE.
"OKAY, SHADE. YOU'RE THE ONE THEY'LL FRY IF YOU SCREW UP."
WHAT A JOKE. I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO I AM. WHAT DO I LOOK LIKE, REALLY? PARENTS? HOME? SHADE... WHAT KIND OF NAME'S THAT? NO. IT'S TOO MUCH, TOO BIG, TOO MAD.
LET'S STAY ALIVE FIRST, THEN WORK OUT WHO WE ARE...
GO DEEPER, DEEPER INTO YOURSELF, DEEPER INTO THE VEST THAT'S ON YOUR OTHER BODY...
DEEPER. THE MADNESS VEST. PART OF YOU, THE REAL YOU, IN THE AREA OF MADNESS...
YOU ARE VEST, THE VEST IS YOU... CHANGE, CONCENTRATE, CHANGE...
CONCENTRATE...
THIS IS GOING TO BE EASY WHEN YOU KNOW HOW...
POLICE. CAN I SEE YOUR DRIVER'S LICENSE, PLEASE, MA'AM...
CHRIST, BILLY! LOOK AT HIM! LOOK AT HIS FACE...

JEEZ, LOOKS JUST LIKE... PRESIDENT KENNEDY...
OH NO...
WHAT'S WRONG? WHY'RE THEY STARING AT ME?
TELL YOU LATER, SHADE...
THE LICENSE NUMBER! IT'S THEM...
BUT THAT GUY LOOKED LIKE KENNEDY, NOT TROY GRENZER...
WHO GIVES A SHIT, HIT 'EM...
YOU WERE MEANT TO LOOK INCONSPICUOUS, SO YOU CHOOSE THE FACE OF A PRESIDENT...?
WHO I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE. NO COINCIDENCE. BEING INFLUENCED. PICKING UP ON SOMETHING. THE MADNESS...
THE MADNESS IS MANIFESTING ITSELF SOMEWHERE AND I'M PICKING UP ON IT...
FDNNGGG FDNNGGG FDNNGGG
MR. KENNEDY, YOU CAN'T SAY DALLAS DOESN'T LOVE YOU...

MIDDAY TRAFFIC SLOW AND TORTUROUS ON ELM STREET BY DEALEY PLAZA.
HEAT HAZE AND CAR FUMES AND HOT RUBBER.
PASSED THE COUNTY JAIL AND THE DALTEX BUILDING AND THE TEXAS SCHOOL BOOK DEPOSITORY...
A BROKEN DOWN TRUCK ON MAIN STREET. TRAFFIC COPS BECK AND KAWOSKI ON ELM.
OH, THEY'RE IN AN EVIL TEMPER TODAY, WHAT WITH THE HEAT AND THE FUMES AND THE TRAFFIC.
HOW THEY'D LIKE SOME NICE SMALL PUNK TO TRY SOMETHING. HOW THEY'D LOVE SOME LITTLE JERK TO GET IN THEIR WAY, TO SAY "BOO," TO ASK THE TIME. ANY GODDAMN EXCUSE WOULD DO.
HEY, KAWOSKI, GET A LOAD OF THAT...
JESUS H.... THAT'S SICK. GODDAMN CLEVER BUT SICK. MUST BE DOUBLES OR WEARING MASKS OR SOME SHIT...
THERE'S GOTTA BE A LAW AGAINST IT, WHATEVER IT IS.

THE LIMO'S ONLY GOING ELEVEN MILES AN HOUR. BECK STEPS UP TO IT, BUT THEN HEARS A KIND OF WHISTLE.
A PARTING OF AIR, A **SEVERING** OF ALL THINGS POSSIBLE...
IT'S **REAL**, AS REAL AS **TELEVISION**.
THE HALO OF **BRAIN** AND **BONE** ABOVE JACK'S SPASTIC HEAD...
OH GOD, BECK, I'VE GOT HIS **BRAINS** ALL OVER ME...
YOU **CAN'T** HAVE. LOOK...
HIS TEETH WILL ALWAYS BE **PERFECT**, HIS SMILE THE SMILE OF A **SUN GOD**, HIS WIFE BESIDE HIM AND PERFECT.
TEXAN SUN ON THE LIMO'S PERFECT POLISHED BONNET...
THE **CLICK**, THE PUFFS OF **SMOKE**, THE **SPASTIC HEAD**, THE **HALO**, THE **BULLETS**. POOR **JACQUELINE**. NEARLY **THIRTY YEARS** AGO...
THE **ZAPRUDER FILM**, MAKING IT REAL FOR **ALL** OF US, FOR **ALWAYS**.

I'M GONNA BE SICK. WHAT'S HAPPENING? HE WAS *SHOT* AND THEN, AND THEN...
GOTTA BE SOME KINDA TRICK. AIN'T *POSSIBLE*...
HE HALF EXPECTS THE LIMO TO *DISAPPEAR* AS SOON AS HE TOUCHES IT BUT IT DOESN'T, IT'S *HOT* AND *SMOOTH* AND *REAL* AND HE SMELLS THE *FIRST LADY'S PERFUME* BUT HE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO *NAME* IT...
STOP THE *CAR*. I DUNNO WHAT'S GOING ON BUT *STOP* THE GODDAMN--
IT HASN'T STOPPED. IT'S *NEVER* STOPPED. SOME ARE STILL *SCREAMING*, SOME ARE STILL *HOWLING*, OTHERS STILL *LYING*.
JFK IS STILL *DYING* BENEATH THE HOT TEXAN SUN.
THE BULLET HITS HIM. *BANG*.
HE JOLTS, BOTH HANDS CLUTCHING HIS THROAT, IN A STRANGLED VOICE, HE *SAYS*...
MY GOD, I'M HIT.
THEN MORE BULLETS, *BANG BANG BANG*. JACKKNIFED BACKWARDS IN THE SEAT, HIS HEAD EXPLODING, JACQUELINE KENNEDY SAYING...
I LOVE YOU, JACK...
JACK... THEY'VE KILLED MY HUSBAND...

THEN SHE LOOKS AT HER HANDS AS THE LIMOUSINE PICKS UP SPEED AND SHE SAYS...
I HAVE HIS BRAINS ON MY HAND...
I HAVE HIS BRAINS ON MY HAND. I HAVE HIS BRAINS ON MY HAND.
IT WASN'T... IT WASN'T ME. I WAS JUST THE PATSY.
IF ONLY I COULD'VE REPORTED TO THE WARREN COMMISSION.
BUT THEY WOULDN'T LET ME.
THE TARMAC OF DEALEY PLAZA BEGINS TO BULGE AND RUPTURE. THERE HAVE BEEN TOO MANY QUESTIONS UNANSWERED, TOO MANY LIES, TOO MANY PEOPLE GETTING AWAY WITH TOO MUCH.
ROMANTIC AMERICA'S DEAD AND GONE. IT'S WITH JOHN KENNEDY IN HIS GRAVE.
IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY THE SPHINX OF THEBES STRANGLED PASSERS-BY WHEN THEY COULD NOT SOLVE THE RIDDLE SHE PUT TO THEM...
WHERE'D THE LIMO GO? WHERE'S THE BIG LIMO?
THE COUNTRY'S BEING STRANGLED, I'M BEING STRANGLED, WE'RE ALL BEING STRANGLED. THE BULLET'S STILL LODGED IN OUR THROAT...

THE TARMAC ON DEALEY PLAZA **RUPTURES, TWISTING** LIKE A **WOMAN** IN **LABOR**...
AND OUT IT COMES, OUT IT GROWS,
FROM THE **WOMB** OF **DALLAS**...
IMPREGNATED BY SEEDS OF **BLOOD** AND **BRAIN** AND **BONE**, OF CONSPIRACY AND DECEIT, OF COWARDICE AND CORRUPTION AND GREED, PLANTED HERE ON A **HOT BAD FRIDAY**.
FIFTEEN SECONDS PAST 12:30 P.M., NOVEMBER 22, 1963...
...THE KENNEDY SPHINX. THE KENNEDY SPHINX...
WHO KILLED JOHN F. KENNEDY?
AND WHO SHALL ANSWER HIS RIDDLE?

SO THE PERSON CHOSEN TO BE THE LEADER OF YOUR COUNTRY WAS **MURDERED**, AND YOU HAD SOMETHING CALLED THE **WARREN COMMISSION** TO COVER IT ALL UP...
AND THE PEOPLE **REALLY** RESPONSIBLE WERE NEVER EVEN **NAMED**...
AND THE PEOPLE YOU EMPLOY TO **PROTECT** YOU, THE C.I.A., THE **F.B.I.**, THEY ACTUALLY **HELPED** THE PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE TO **GET AWAY** WITH IT?
AND THIS WAS A **POPULAR** PRESIDENT?
WHAT HAPPENS WITH AN **UNPOPULAR** PRESIDENT? DO YOU JUST LEAVE HIM IN THE GUTTER TO ROT OR WHAT?
HMM. DOES SOUND A LITTLE **FAR-FETCHED** WHEN YOU PUT IT LIKE THAT, BUT THAT'S THE WAY IT HAPPENED, MORE OR LESS.
AND THIS IS WHAT YOU'RE PICKING UP ON, J.F.K...
YES. THE MADNESS IS MATERIALIZING, USING KENNEDY, OR RATHER SOMEONE **OBSESSED** WITH KENNEDY, AS A VEHICLE.
JESUS, SHADE, WHAT'S HAPPENING? WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE ROAD...?
AM I HALLUCINATING?
NO. I THINK WE'RE BEING PULLED ALONG BY SOMETHING, ON THE CURRENTS OF THE MADNESS...
A **MADSTREAM**. YEAH, MADSTREAM. AS GOOD A NAME AS ANY.

IT'S COMING FROM THE *AREA OF MADNESS*. THAT'S *PART* OF ME. MY *REAL* BODY'S THERE...
THE *MADNESS VEST* IS PART OF ME, TOO. IT'S LIKE BEING TELEPATHICALLY LINKED. NO, *PHYSICALLY* LINKED TO THE MADNESS.
IT'S IN THE AREA BEYOND TIME AND SPACE. IT'S *FLUID*, LIKE *DREAMTIME* AND *DREAMSPACE*...
GREAT. YOU MEAN WE'RE ON A SHORT-CUT TO THIS *KENNEDY MADMAN?*
AND ALL THE STUFF *INSIDE* HIS HEAD'S GONNA BE *OUTSIDE* IT...?
I THINK SO. PRIVATE MADNESS MADE PUBLIC.
SEEMS EVEN IF I DON'T WANT TO FACE THIS, I *HAVE* TO. MY VEST'S AN *UMBILICAL CORD*, ATTACHING ME TO IT.
ATTACHING...
SO WHY CAN'T YOU *BREAK* IT? BREAK THE...
SHADE? SHADE, WHAT'S...
UGNN... SH...SHADE... DON'T...
I AIN'T SHADE. SHADE'S *GONE*, HONEY. SHADE'S *HISTORY*...
TROY GRENZER'S BACK. *TROY'S* THE *BOY* NOW...
I GUESS YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NOW?

THE *CARS* SCREECH AND CRASH AND HOOT AND THE DRIVERS AND PASSENGERS SCREAM AND CRY JUST AS THEY *SCREAMED* AND CRIED ON THAT NOVEMBER DAY...
WHO KILLED JOHN F. KENNEDY?
I AHWLLL... I AHWWW...
THIS SPHINX DOESN'T ***STRANGLE.*** THIS SPHINX IS ***THE KENNEDY SPHINX***. THIS SPHINX IS ***AMERICAN***. IT ***CONSUMES***. IT EATS.
IT'S EATING AWAY AT AMERICA.
AIIEEEE!
CHILDREN'S EYES ARE *COVERED* AS THEY MUST HAVE BEEN THAT DAY IN 1963, AS THE *COUNTRY* COVERED ITS EYES RATHER THAN LOOK FOR THE *TRUTH*...
BUT YOU CANNOT HIDE FROM THE KENNEDY SPHINX BY COVERING YOUR EYES. THE KENNEDY SPHINX WILL KEEP EATING AMERICA, UNTIL AMERICA ANSWERS ITS RIDDLE...
WHO KILLED JOHN F. KENNEDY?
NOT MY BABY...
PLEASE. NOT MY BABY...

Royal MOTEL
TEL
POLICEMAN SAW TROY GRENZER ALL RIGHT. SWORE IT WAS GRENZER, BUT THEN...
BUT THEN HE ALSO SWORE THAT AN ELECTRIC CHAIR GREW OUT OF GRENZER'S HEAD AND FLEW AT HIM. AFTER THAT, HE PASSED OUT.
HOW SURPRISING. GO ON, MR. CONNOR.
AHEM. WELL, THIS IS THE BEST BIT, SIR.
THERE WAS A GIRL WITH GRENZER. OWNER OF THE MOTEL GOT THEIR LICENSE PLATE NUMBER. CAR BELONGS TO ONE KATHY GEORGE.
NOW HERE'S THE WEIRD PART...
SHE'S THE DAUGHTER OF GRENZER'S LAST VICTIMS. THAT COUPLE HE BUTCHERED DOWN IN LOUISIANA.
GOT A HISTORY OF MENTAL ILLNESS. SEEMS SHE HELPED HIM ESCAPE. SEEMS THEY'RE ON THE ROAD TOGETHER.
CONNOR, DO YOU KNOW THAT I HAVE CANCER? MY DOCTOR SAYS I'LL BE LUCKY TO LIVE THE YEAR. DID YOU KNOW THAT, CONNOR?
AHHH, NO, I MEAN, WHAT CAN I SAY? I'M SORRY, MR. STRINGER, SIR...
CANCER IS RATHER INTERESTING. I BELIEVE IT'S A KIND OF WEARING OUT OF INFORMATION. RUNAWAY CELLS WHO'VE FORGOTTEN WHO THEY ARE OR WHERE THEY'RE GOING.
BUT IT MIGHTN'T BE RESTRICTED TO CREATURES OR CELLS...
WHY NOT CANCER OF CIVILIZATION? WHY NOT CANCER OF THE IMAGINATION? IMAGINE A CANCER OF REALITY?
MAKE SURE ALL NORMAL MEDIA CHANNELS ARE SENT PHOTOS OF GRENZER AND THE GIRL, CONNOR. OFFER THE USUAL REWARDS FOR THEIR CAPTURE.
I WILL BE MORE THAN INTRIGUED TO MEET THEM BOTH. ALIVE.

·GET OFF... SHADE, COME BACK, SHADE...
NGGG... NO GOOD STRUGGLING, GIRL. JUST TAKE IT. YOU ALL WANT IT...
BHOFFF!
AHHHH!
NO... DON'T... HE'S GONE, KATHY. GRENZER'S GONE...
GONE? GONE?
YOU SAID HE WAS DEAD, YOU BASTARD. DEAD!
HE IS. I MEAN, HE'S MOSTLY DEAD. BUT THERE'S STILL SOME RESIDUE OF TROY GRENZER LEFT, THAT'S SURVIVED, IN HIS BODY...
IT'S UNDER CONTROL NOW. IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN.
YOU BET IT WON'T. GET OUT OF THE CAR, SHADE.
KATHY, HE'S GONE. I PROMISE, HE'S UNDER CONTROL...
GET OUT! I WAS CRAZY TO GO THIS FAR WITH YOU.
YOU'LL SEE, SOON AS I REALLY GET TO GRIPS WITH THE VEST I'LL GET RID OF ALL OF HIM, EVERY LAST REMNANT OF TROY...
... GRENZER...
WHO KILLED JOHN F. KENNEDY?

I... I DON'T KNOW... TAKE *ME*...
DON'T HURT MY LITTLE GIRL...
AIIEEEE!
NO!
SHADE? HOW'RE YOU *DOING* THAT?
I DON'T KNOW. I REALLY DON'T KNOW...

WHO KILLED JOHN F. KENNEDY?
HOLD ON TO ME, KATHY. I'M GOING TO TRY TO *FLY*...
FLY?!?
AIEEEOOOO!
SHADE. NAAA...
SHUT UP, I'M TRYING TO *CONCENTRATE*...
AAAHHH GOD I'VE LOST IT...
IIEEEEE!
I CAN FLY I CAN FLY I CAN FLY
COME ON YOU BASTARD I CAN *FLY!*
YES... COME ON. HARNESS THE POWER OF THE MADNESS VEST. THE *POWER* OF *MADNESS,* THE POWER TO CHANGE, TO *CHANGE*...
ABOVE US, THE MADNESS, IT'S COMING FROM *THERE*. I KNOW--HOW DO I KNOW?--WHERE IT IS...
SIXTH FLOOR OF THE *TEXAS SCHOOL BOOK DEPOSITORY*...
THE *SNIPER'S* PERCH.

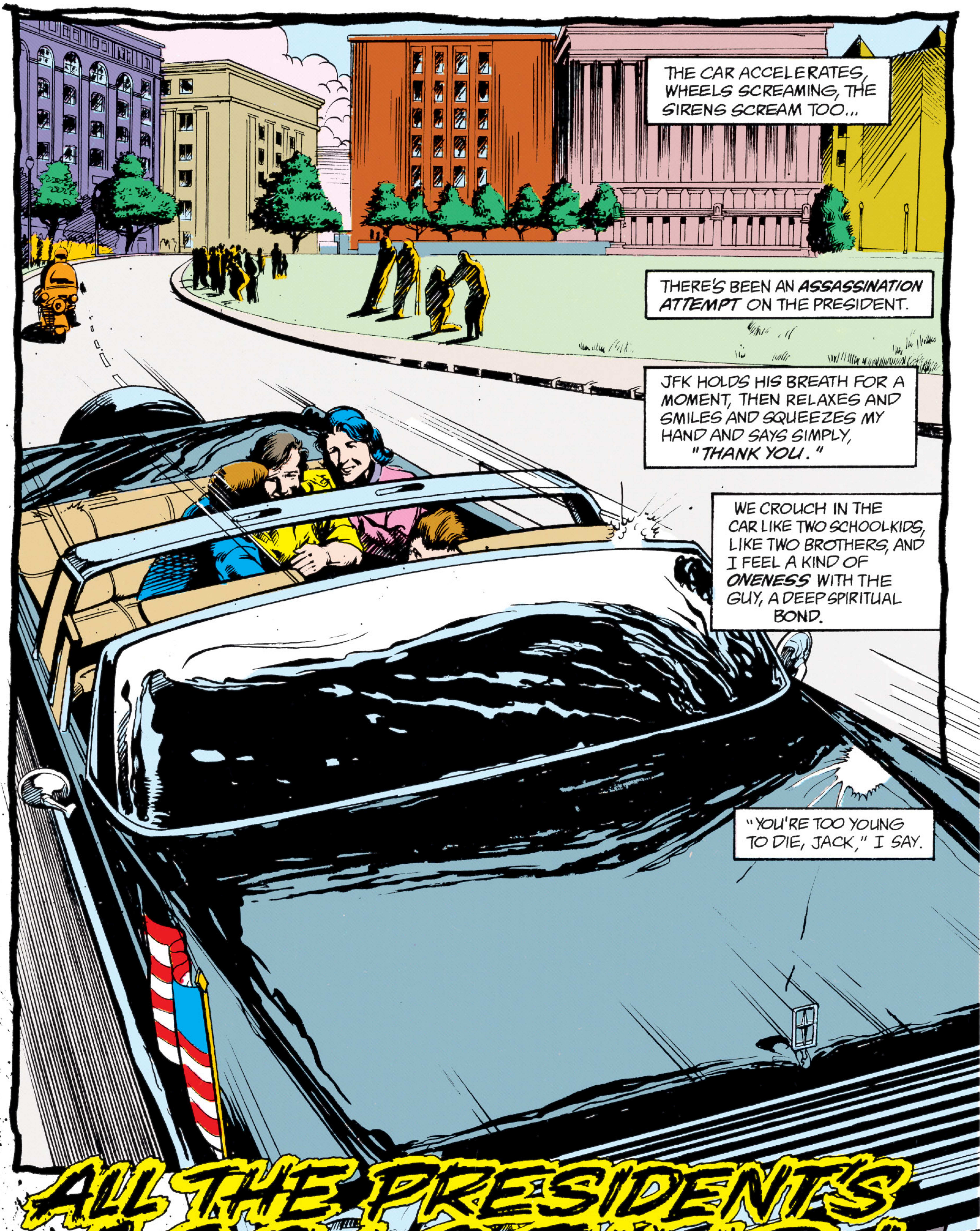
SHADE, WE'RE GOING HIGHER. PUT ME DOWN, GODDAMN IT, I WANNA GO DOWN...
HE'S IN THERE, KATHY. BEHIND THE WINDOW, THE SNIPER'S PERCH...
SNIPER'S PERCH?
I HAVE HIS BRAINS ON MY HAND. I HAVE HIS BRAINS ON MY HAND.
MR. KENNEDY, YOU CAN'T SAY DALLAS DOESN'T LOVE YOU...
MY GOD, I'M HIT...
JESUS...

BEFORE SETTING OUT FOR DALLAS, JFK TOLD HIS WIFE "WE'RE HEADING INTO NUT COUNTRY TODAY"...
MOST OF THE WITNESSES SAW SMOKE AND HEARD SHOTS COMING FROM THE GRASSY KNOLL, IN FRONT OF THE PRESIDENTIAL MOTORCADE...
IN 1962 A MAFIA BOSS SAID HE WAS GOING TO HAVE KENNEDY KILLED AND SET UP "A NUT TO TAKE THE BLAME"...
THIS GUY LIVED JUST OUTSIDE NEW ORLEANS. LEE HARVEY OSWALD'S HOME TOWN...
WHAT DO WE DO NOW?
I DON'T KNOW. TRY TO CALM HIM DOWN, I GUESS...
LISTEN, I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, BUT--
NO! GET AWAY! IT'S JACK RUBY. GET AWAY, RUBY...
IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT. IF YOU HADN'T KILLED OSWALD HE WOULD HAVE TOLD THE WHOLE STORY, I'D BE FREE!
I'M NOT RUBY... YOU'VE GOT TO STOP. YOU'RE MAKING ALL THIS HAPPEN, A MADNESS--
GET AWAY!
KATHY? KATHY, YOU THERE?
I THINK SO. WHAT'S HAPPENED? I CAN'T SEE... MY EYES, THEY'RE BLINDED...
IT'S CLEARING. I'M STARTING TO SEE SOMETHING...
AND DO YOU HEAR IT? SOUNDS LIKE...
SOUNDS LIKE SOME KINDA CHEERING...

MR. KENNEDY, YOU CAN'T SAY DALLAS DOESN'T LOVE YOU NOW...
SHADE... SHADE, IS THAT YOU? YOU LOOK LIKE KENNEDY AGAIN. YOU ARE KENNEDY...
CHANGE, SHADE, CHANGE...
I CAN'T. I CAN'T STOP SMILING AND WAVING.
I'M TRAPPED.
MY GOD.
I'M GOING TO BE ASSASSINATED!

McCARTHYISM

A HOT FRIDAY IN DALLAS. NOVEMBER, 1963.
PRESIDENT JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY IS ABOUT TO BE *SLAUGHTERED*.
ONLY HE *WON'T* BE. NOT THIS TIME. NO CLASPING OF TORN THROAT, NO LEAD-HEWN HALO OF BLOOD AND BRAIN.
NO ASSASSINATION.
I'M FED UP WITH HIM BEING ASSASSINATED. I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE, TRYING TO SOLVE THE *RIDDLE* OF *WHO KILLED JFK*.
SO I'VE TRAVELLED BACK IN TIME TO *SAVE* HIM.
WHAT IN GOD'S NAME...
DON'T *TALK*, JACK...
...*DUCK!*
FDDDMMMM
FDDDMMMM


THE CAR ACCELERATES, WHEELS SCREAMING, THE SIRENS SCREAM TOO...
THERE'S BEEN AN *ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT* ON THE PRESIDENT.
JFK HOLDS HIS BREATH FOR A MOMENT, THEN RELAXES AND SMILES AND SQUEEZES MY HAND AND SAYS SIMPLY, "*THANK YOU*."
WE CROUCH IN THE CAR LIKE TWO SCHOOLKIDS, LIKE TWO BROTHERS, AND I FEEL A KIND OF *ONENESS* WITH THE GUY, A DEEP SPIRITUAL BOND.
"YOU'RE TOO YOUNG TO DIE, JACK," I SAY.

ALL THE PRESIDENT'S ASSASSINS!

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CENTRAL DALLAS. JFK'S BEEN SCREAMING AT SECRET SERVICE GOONS FOR THIRTY MINUTES. THERE ARE GONNA BE SOME BALLS CHEWED OFF OVER THIS!
IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR *YOU*, DUANE, THEY'D HAVE GOT ME.
I'VE ORDERED A PLANE FOR WASHINGTON. I'D LIKE YOU TO COME, TOO.
SURE, JACK. BUT IT'S FUNNY WHAT YOU SAID, *"THEY'D"* HAVE GOT ME. IT ALWAYS HAS BEEN *THEY*, THOUGH WE NEVER KNEW JUST *WHO THEY* WERE...
I REMEMBER THE DAY YOU WERE *SHOT*. I WAS IN KANSAS CITY. A GUY RUNS OUT ONTO THE STREET AND YELLS TO THIS OTHER GUY.
"THEY'VE GOT KENNEDY." *THEY'VE* GOT KENNEDY.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND...
THIS ISN'T GOING TO BE EASY TO SWALLOW, JACK, BUT I WANT TO COME CLEAN. I'M FROM THE *FUTURE*. I'M *DUANE TRILBY*, FROM *1990*.
I CAME BACK IN TIME. TO *SAVE* YOU.
AND IN THIS, THIS FUTURE OF YOURS, I WAS *HIT*?
YEAH. THOSE BULLETS TORE YOUR SKULL OFF. I'M AFRAID *BOBBY* GETS HIT IN A FEW YEARS AS WELL. ONLY NOW *I'M* HERE, WE CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT, TOO.
BOBBY? JESUS... AND WHAT ABOUT *TEDDY?* THEY GET TEDDY, TOO?
AHHH, NO. THEY DIDN'T NEED TO WIPE TEDDY OUT.
TEDDY WAS DOING A FINE JOB OF THAT HIMSELF.
RED
BUT IT'S A LONG STORY. MAYBE WE'D BETTER FINISH IT ON THE PLANE TO WASHINGTON...

NIGHT. WASHINGTON. THE WHITE HOUSE BATHED IN LIGHTS. BEFORE VIETNAM, BEFORE WATERGATE, BEFORE CRACK, BEFORE AIDS, BEFORE MARY-ANN...
WARREN? THEY LET EARL WARREN HEAD THE COMMISSION INVESTIGATING MY ASSASSINATION? AND GERRY FORD WAS ON IT, TOO? BOY OH BOY...
HOW DID JACQUELINE TAKE IT?
BADLY, LIKE ANY WIFE WHO LOVES A HUSBAND WOULD DO. THEY SAY SHE NEVER GOT OVER IT. WAS ALWAYS BITTER...
DID SHE MARRY AGAIN? TELL ME THE TRUTH, DUANE.
AHHH, NO, JACK. SHE NEVER REMARRIED, THOUGH SHE HAD PLENTY OF OFFERS. ALL TYPES WERE AFTER HER, FROM FILM STARS TO SHIPPING MAGNATES...
OKAY, SO IT'S NOT EXACTLY THE TRUTH. WHY HURT A GUY WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE TO?
THAT SOUNDS LIKE HER. THERE'S STILL ONE THING I DON'T UNDERSTAND, THOUGH, DUANE. WHY WERE YOU SO OBSESSED WITH WHO KILLED ME?
I HAD A DAUGHTER. MARY-ANN. A BEAUTIFUL LITTLE GIRL, SO FULL OF LIFE... SO...
...SO PERFECT.
BUT SHE WASN'T PERFECT. SHE DIED WHEN SHE WAS SEVEN. SEVEN. HAD THIS HOLE IN HER HEART.
I WAS ALREADY WORKING ON A KENNEDY BOOK. IT BECAME MY WHOLE LIFE. I SUPPOSE WHILE I WAS TRYING TO SOLVE YOUR MYSTERY I COULD FORGET THE OTHER MYSTERY, THE MYSTERY I COULD NEVER SOLVE...
WHY DID MARY-ANN HAVE TO DIE?

SO LIKE THE TWO GUYS WE ARE, WE CRY A LITTLE AND GET A LITTLE DRUNK AND ABOUT TWO IN THE MORNING HUG AND SAY GOODNIGHT.
WE'RE NOT SO DISSIMILAR, JFK AND ME. BOTH KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO HURT.
I'M GIVEN A SUITE IN THE WHITE HOUSE. THIS IS A NEW LIFE. I'LL BE JFK'S GURU. I'LL TELL HIM TO ROUND UP JACK RUBY AND TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT HOOVER.
LOOK AFTER MARTIN LUTHER KING. INVITE JOHN LENNON TO THE WHITE HOUSE. THERE'S MUCH TO DO.
JFK GOES TO HIS WIFE, WHO'D BE A WIDOW IF IT WEREN'T FOR ME, WHOSE DRESS WOULD NOW BE COVERED IN BLOOD AND BRAINS...
DUANE IS A REMARKABLE MAN, JACQUELINE. I FEEL AN AFFINITY WITH HIM. WHAT DO YOU THINK?
I THINK HE'S... DANGEROUS. THE SORT OF MAN WHO COULD MAKE A WOMAN DO CRAZY THINGS...
I'M GLAD I LOVE YOU, JACK. I THINK IF A WOMAN FELL IN LOVE WITH DUANE TRILBY SHE COULD... SHE COULD LOSE HER SOUL...
WHAT IS IT, HONEY? WHAT'S UP?
YOUR BODY!?!
NO, NO, NO. NOT LIKE THIS. IT DOESN'T HAPPEN LIKE THIS...
MY GOD, I... KATHY... I...
KATHY? WHO'S KATHY?
YOU ARE... I'M NOT... I'M NOT...
NO! WHITE HOUSE! 1963! JFK LIVES! NO ASSASSINATION!
THIS ISN'T REAL, KATHY. YOU'RE NOT JACQUELINE KENNEDY. I'M NOT J.F.K., I'M... I'M SHADE.
WE'RE IN A MAD WORLD...

NO! I DON'T WANT THIS! KENNEDY IS *ALIVE!* THERE'S NO *MYSTERY*.
THERE'S NO RIDDLE...
I SAVED KENNEDY! HE'S MY *BUDDY!*
MY GOD, SHADE, THAT WAS, THAT WAS...
I KNOW. I KNOW...
THAT WAS THE WEIRDEST EXPERIENCE OF MY *LIFE!* I WAS *COMPLETELY* TAKEN IN. I FELT AS MUCH *JACQUELINE KENNEDY* AS I DO *MYSELF*. NOW...
MAYBE YOU'RE *NOT* YOURSELF NOW. MAYBE *KATHY GEORGE* IS PART OF THIS MADNESS, *TOO...*
OH GOD, THAT'S NOT TRUE, IS IT?
NO. NO...
I'M *ALMOST POSITIVE* WE'RE REAL NOW.

WHO KILLED JFK?
WHO KILLED JFK?
UHHHH...
LEE HARVEY OSWALD?...
KATHY!
WHO KILLED JFK? WHO KILLED MARY-ANN? ROMANTIC AMERICA'S DEAD AND GONE, IT'S WITH THEM BOTH IN THEIR GRAVES...
TRILBY, ***DO*** SOMETHING! YOU'RE MAKING THIS HAPPEN. ***STOP*** IT. GET THE GIRL OUT OF THE SPHINX...
I DIDN'T SHOOT ANYBODY, NO SIR. I'M JUST A PATSY IN THIS...
NO GOOD TALKING TO HIM. TO BEAT HIM I'VE GOT TO ENTER HIS WORLD...
I HAVE TO ENTER THE MADNESS...
I MUST BE ***PLASTIC***. I MUST TRANSPOSE MYSELF INTO A NEW AND MAD VIEW OF REALITY.

I MUST BE THE CHANGING MAN...
DUANE. **DADDY.** PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER NOW...
HRRMMPPH?
MARY-ANN! MARY-ANN, YOU'VE COME BACK TO ME...
THERE'S NO TIME FOR THAT SOPPY STUFF, DADDY.
YOU AND ME GOTTA GO INSIDE THE SPHINX, GET THAT NICE LADY OUT AND GET RID OF THE SPHINX ONCE AND FOR ALL...
THAT'S NOT SO EASY, SUGAR. ONLY WAY TO GET RID OF THE SPHINX IS TO **ANSWER HIS RIDDLE...**
SO THAT'S WHAT WE'LL **DO**, DADDY.
I'LL SHOW YOU WHO KILLED JFK...
HELLO? IS ANYBODY IN HERE?
HEY, ARE YOU A POLICEMAN?

AND THEN THE WORLD LURCHES, LIKE MY STOMACH. I HAVE TO HOLD ONTO THE COP TO STOP FALLING. A PIECE OF HIS LUNG OR SOMETHING SPILLS OVER ME.
WE'RE ON A KIND OF CONVEYOR BELT. I MUSTN'T THROW UP, NOT YET...
THE COP MUST'VE GOT CHEWED BY THE SPHINX'S TEETH ON THE WAY IN...
GUESS I'M JUST LUCKY, HUH?
DAMN, I NEED A DRINK. I NEED TWENTY DRINKS.
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?
CLIKK
CLIKK
CLIKK
CLIKK
FDMMM
FDMMM
FDMM
OH MY GOD.
A SHOOTING GALLERY.

I RECOGNIZE THIS PLACE. ELM STREET, DEALEY PLAZA. BUT EVERYTHING'S STANDING STILL.
THE FROZEN MOMENT BEFORE JFK WAS ASSASSINATED.
MARY-ANN, SWEETHEART, I DON'T CARE ABOUT THIS STUFF ANYMORE.
WHY DON'T WE JUST GO OFF, YOU AND ME. I'LL BUY YOU A SODA AND WE CAN TALK ABOUT WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO NOW WE'RE TOGETHER AGAIN...
NO. FIRST YOU HAVE TO GET RID OF THE SPHINX.
LOOK...
I SEE THEM! TWO SNIPERS ON THE GRASSY KNOLL! MY GOD, I SEE THEM. IT'S TRUE...
BUT THEY'RE LIKE GHOSTS...
DALLAS IS CRAWLING WITH GHOSTS. GHOST ASSASSINS, LINING UP TO KILL KENNEDY.
LET'S GO DEEPER...
DON'T TELL ME. THEY'RE CORSICAN HITMEN, HIRED BY THE MOB TO GET RID OF JFK, AND EMASCULATE ATTORNEY-GENERAL BOBBY.
HEH HEH. AT LAST. THE TRUTH. THE MOB KILLED JFK...
BUT THERE'S MORE THAN JUST ONE TRUTH. THERE'S MORE THAN JUST ONE PAST. THIS ONE JUST HAS THE GREATEST TENDENCY TO EXIST...
THE PAST IS A BRANCH, FORKING THROUGH AND OUT FROM DALLAS. THERE'S MORE THAN ONE TRUTH, MORE THAN ONE ASSASSIN. BUT BEHIND THEM ALL IS THE SAME HAND, THE SHADOW OF THE SAME CREATURE... LET'S GO DEEPER STILL...

CAN'T SEE A THING DOWN THERE. JUST BLUE, BOTTOMLESS BLUE...
BUT YOU AIN'T GOT NO **CHOICE**, GIRL. IT'S A LEAP INTO THE UNKNOWN OR A BULLET THROUGH THE HEAD...
♫ BLUE MOON... ♩
♩ YOU SAW ME STANDING... ♪
♪ ...ALONE... ♫
THERE'S A POLICE **TEE VEE CREW** AT THE SCENE... WE'RE GETTING A PICTURE THROUGH, MR. STRINGER...
JESUS, MR. STRINGER, IT'S UNREAL.
THE INCIDENT AT GRENZER'S EXECUTION. THE CRAZY EXPLOSION AT THE MENTAL HOSPITAL. THE COPS WHO SAW AN ELECTRIC CHAIR GROW OUT OF GRENZER'S BODY, AND NOW THIS...
WHATEVER **THIS** IS...
JESUS, PILOT... WHAT'S HAPPENING?
OVER THERE! MY GOD, LOOK AT IT...

GET HER STEADY, PILOT. NO POINT *CRASHING* HER, IS THERE?
IT'S GONE! WHAT THE HELL WAS IT? HOLOGRAM? LASER SHOW?
NO. THE OLD EXPLANATIONS ARE *REDUNDANT* NOW, CONNOR. IT'S THE BEGINNING OF SOMETHING TOTALLY *NEW*.
A NEW FRAME OF REFERENCE. A NEW *MODEL OF REALITY*.
THANK YOU, LORD. THANK YOU.

I CAN FEEL THIS STRANGE BODY, THE LIGHT VOICE STARTLING ME, HER SKINNY LEGS AND ARMS, HER WELL-SCRUBBED LITTLE GIRL'S SMELL...
TRILBY FOLLOWS ME, HIS DAUGHTER. LETS ME LEAD HIM THROUGH HIS MADWORLD AND SHOW HIM WHAT I MUST SHOW HIM...
I HAVE TO CONCENTRATE NOT TO ***BECOME*** HER, TO FORGET WHO I AM. AM I ***ENJOYING*** THIS? NO, LEAVE THAT, LEAVE THAT THOUGHT FOR LATER...
ALL THE PRESIDENT'S ASSASSINS, THE LIKELY AND THE FAR-FETCHED, FROM MAFIOSI TO AMERICAN DAUGHTERS OF THE REVOLUTION...
JOHN BIRCH, TEAMSTERS UNION, K.G.B., KU KLUX KLAN, F.B.I., ANTI-CASTRO UNITS, C.I.A. AND THE MOB...
SO OFTEN, BEHIND IT ALL, THE ***C.I.A.*** AND THE ***MOB***.
I SHOW HIM SOME OLD MOB CONTACTS OF ***JOE***, JFK'S PA, GIVING MONEY TO HELP BUY JFK INTO THE WHITE HOUSE...
JFK AND BOBBY WERE HURTING ***OLD FRIENDS*** WHEN THEY WENT AFTER ORGANIZED CRIME. AND JOE WAS PAST CONTROLLING HIS BOYS...

HOW ABOUT ***OSWALD?*** HE ***WAS*** JUST A PATSY, THEN?
JFK
WELCOME JACK & JACKIE
WELCOME TO DALLAS
WELCOME TO "BIG D" JACK & JACKIE
OSWALD HAD BEEN AN OPERATIVE FOR YEARS, SINCE HE WAS A MARINE.
PLAYED A COMPLEX GAME OF ***MULTIPLE BLUFF,*** WORKING FOR SO MANY GROUPS THAT AT TIMES EVEN THEY AND HE NO LONGER KNEW WHO, ULTIMATELY, WAS BEING SERVED...
HE SMUGGLES A ***GUN*** INTO THE ***TEXAS SCHOOLBOOK DEPOSITORY,*** LEAVES IT THERE FOR A GUNMAN.
IT'S INSURANCE, IN CASE OTHERS DON'T DO THE JOB...
BUT A FEW MINUTES AFTER THE HIT, HE KNOWS HE'S BEEN ***SET UP.*** HE GOES BACK TO HIS BOARDING HOUSE.
SOON A ***POLICE CAR*** PULLS UP OUTSIDE AND HONKS ITS HORN. THE SIGN THAT IT'S SAFE TO LEAVE. BUT BY NOW HE'S ***PANICKING...***
HE WAS MEANT TO BE MET IN A CINEMA BY MEMBERS OF THE C.I.A. AND MOB-BACKED ANTI-CASTRO UNIT HE ***THOUGHT*** HE'D BEEN WORKING FOR...
EXIT
THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO GET HIM OUT OF THE COUNTRY, GIVE HIM A NEW I.D. THOUGH ***SCARED,*** OSWALD HAS NOWHERE ELSE TO GO...
OF COURSE THIS IS WHERE THE ***COPS*** GET HIM. ***JACK RUBY'S*** ALREADY BEEN TOLD TO PUT OSWALD TO SLEEP, OR ELSE.
RUBY WILL GET ALL THE HELP HE'LL NEED FROM THE POLICE DEPARTMENT TO GET OSWALD, THE LONE NUT ASSASSIN.
EXIT

ARE YOU AN ANGEL? YOU BELIEVE IN HEAVEN, DON'T YOU?
I THINK I DO. I HOPE MY MOMMY AND DADDY ARE IN HEAVEN RIGHT NOW. BUT I'M NOT AN ANGEL, DARLING.
I THINK YOU ARE. I THINK I'VE ALREADY BEEN THROUGH THIS. I LOOKED DOWN AT MY MOMMY AND DADDY CRYING AND I WAS WONDERING WHAT FOR...
YOU CAN HAVE MY DOLL, IF YOU LIKE. MY DADDY GAVE IT TO ME THE DAY I FLOATED AND WENT TO HEAVEN.
MARY-ANN... THIS REALLY IS YOU, ISN'T IT? I MEAN, YOU'RE NOT JUST PART OF THE...
...MADNESS...
WE GO DEEPER INTO THE MADNESS, THE TRUTHS, THE KENNEDY SPHINX. I MUST SHOW HIM ALL, REPULSE HIM, MAKE HIM DISGORGE HIS MADNESS...
OVER THERE. DEAD MARILYNS. DIED THE NIGHT BEFORE SHE SAID SHE WAS GOING TO BLOW THE WHISTLE ON JOHN AND BOBBY.
LOTS OF TRUTHS THERE. LOTS OF CORPSES, FLESH, BOOZE, SEX, SCANDAL. BUT IT GETS EVER SO MESSY. WANNA TAKE A PEEK?
NO... I DON'T WANT TO GO DOWN THERE...
WELCOME
HELP!
DALLAS POLICE 54018

JESUS, WHAT'S...
PSYCHEDELIC KENNEDY IN THE WHITE HOUSE. AN INTERESTING AVENUE TO EXPLORE.
ON JFK'S BEHALF, A GIRLFRIEND GOT ADVICE FROM TIM LEARY ON CHEMICALLY-INDUCED **MIND EXPANSION**...
IMAGINE A "TURNED-ON" PRESIDENT, LEADING THE STATES THROUGH THE DECADE OF LOVE. TO SOME, THAT WAS ***UN***IMAGINABLY TERRIBLE...
THE MR. KENNEDY
SOON AFTER JFK WAS SHOT, THE GIRLFRIEND SAID TO LEARY, "THEY COULDN'T CONTROL HIM ANY MORE. HE WAS CHANGING TOO FAST."
WITHIN THE YEAR SHE WAS **DEAD**. WANNA GO DEEPER INTO THAT? IT GETS WEIRD...
NO... I DON'T WANT TO GO THERE EITHER.
SO I DRAG TRILBY SCREAMING THROUGH ROWS OF GHOST ASSASSINS AND GUTTERFULS OF KENNEDYRHEA, UNTIL...
MR. KENN
HOLD IT! STOP! YOU SAID BEHIND THEM ALL WAS THE SAME HAND... THE SHADOW OF THE SAME CREATURE.
WHAT DID YOU MEAN. WHO?
YOU SAW A DOCUMENTARY ONCE. ABOUT A PRACTICE QUITE COMMON AMONGST PRIMITIVE PEOPLES ALL OVER...
PRESIDENT DEA
IT'S CALLED ***"KILLING THE GOD-KING"***...

THE KING IS A GOD. THE TRIBE **MAKES** HIM A GOD. BUT THEY'RE SCARED THAT HIS DIVINE POWERS WILL DESERT HIM AND THE TRIBE.
KEEPING THE **GODS** ON THE TRIBE'S SIDE IS A MAJOR CONCERN. SO AFTER A PERIOD OF TIME THE GOD-KING IS SLAIN, BEFORE HIS DIVINITY WANES.
BUT... BUT ALL THE PRESIDENT'S ASSASSINS...
THE **SHADOW** OF THE **CREATURE** BEHIND THEM...
THE SHADOW OF **YOU** AND **ME**...
...AND THE SOLDIER AND THE SAILOR AND THE CANDLE STICK MAKER. **AMERICA**, AND AMERICA'S **ALL** OF US, THE SUM TOTAL OF WHAT WE ARE AND WHAT OUR PREDECESSORS WERE.
JFK WAS THE **AMERICAN GOD-KING**. AMERICA **MADE** HIM. AMERICA **SLAYED** HIM...
BUT WHAT ABOUT THE **REAL** KILLERS? THE MAFIA, THE C.I.A....
OH, THE MOB AND THE C.I.A. ARE JUST THE **HIGH PRIESTS**, THE **GUARDIANS** OF **AMERICA'S DIVINITY**...
WHICH IS USUALLY **GREEN** AND COMES WITH A PICTURE OF **MR. WASHINGTON** ON ONE SIDE AND THE WORDS **"IN GOD WE TRUST"** ON THE OTHER...
IS THAT IT? IS THAT ALL THERE IS? THE ANSWER TO THE RIDDLE?
I'M SORRY. I NEVER SAID YOU'D BE ABLE TO MAKE A **BEST SELLER** OUT OF IT.

KATHY, YOU'RE OUT...?
THOUGHT YOU WERE GONNA DO THE BIG MACHO THING AND SAVE ME, HUH?
WHAT'VE YOU DONE WITH MY MARY-ANN?
SHE WAS NEVER HERE, DUANE. I'M SORRY. I JUST CHANGED INTO HER. I TOOK HER FROM YOUR OWN MIND. IT WAS THE ONLY WAY I COULD GET TO YOU.
I WANT MARY-ANN BACK! I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, JUST BRING HER BACK!
YOU'VE HAD A SPECIAL MADNESS, IT TAKES HOLD OF ANY LITTLE CRAZINESS YOU HAVE AND SETS OFF A KIND OF CHAIN REACTION...
THE MADNESS GROWS, OUT OF CONTROL. IT BECOMES REAL. NOT JUST FOR YOU, BUT FOR EVERYONE...
I'M A KIND OF DOCTOR. I'VE ALMOST CURED YOU. AT LEAST, I'VE HELPED YOU CURE YOURSELF. I CAN TAKE THE MADNESS OFF YOU.
ANSWER THE RIDDLE OF THE SPHINX AND I THINK YOU'LL BE RID OF IT.
NO. I DON'T CARE IF MARY-ANN'S REAL OR NOT. BRING HER BACK.
I'M SORRY. I CAN'T DO THAT...
THEN YOU'VE GOTTA BE PUT TO SLEEP.
BMMM
BMMM
BMMM

GUNSHOTS, NOW. WE GOTTA DO SOMETHING, STRINGER.
I SAY WE FLY IN THE CHOPPERS, DROP A FEW DOZEN GRENADES AND SWAMP THE WHOLE GODDAMN AREA WITH NAPALM. SEE HOW THE BIG BASTARD COPES WITH THAT...
YOU SENTIMENTAL OLD LIBERAL, HOPGOOD. DON'T YOU THINK WE SHOULD TRY THE DIRECT APPROACH?
I THINK THAT IS PRETTY DI... AH, YOU'RE BEING FUNNY.
SO HOW ARE YOU GONNA HANDLE IT? STICK YOUR FINGER UP ITS ASS AND SING IT A LULLABY?
NICE IDEA, HOPGOOD. IF NOTHING ELSE WORKS I'LL GIVE IT A WHIRL.
SHADE... OH SHIT, HE'S DEAD.
YOU'VE KILLED HIM...
I DIDN'T SHOOT ANYBODY, NO SIR. I WAS JUST A PATSY IN THIS.
IT WAS JACK RUBY THAT KILLED HIM...
WHO KILLED JFK?
YOU STILL ASKING THAT DUMB QUESTION?
AMERICA KILLED JFK. HEAR ME?
AMERICA KILLED HIM.
IT'S GONE. JFK IS GONE. I'M SORRY YOUR FRIEND'S GONE, TOO, BUT HE LEFT ME WITH NOTHING. HE LEFT ME WITH THE REAL MYSTERY. WHY DID MARY-ANN HAVE TO DIE?
YOU CAN'T JUST TAKE AWAY A MAN'S CRUTCHES WITHOUT GIVING HIM NEW LEGS...

IT'S NO **MYSTERY.** YOUR DAUGHTER HAD A CONGENITAL HEART DEFECT. MAYBE IN A HUNDRED YEARS SHE'D HAVE LIVED, A HUNDRED YEARS AGO SHE WOULDN'T HAVE LIVED A **DAY**.
THERE'S NO MYSTERY. THAT'S JUST **LIFE**.
WHERE DID YOU GET THAT?
THIS? YOUR **DAUGHTER** GAVE IT TO ME. I THINK I ACTUALLY **MET** HER.
MAYBE YOU SHOULD STOP FEELING SO GODDAMN **SORRY** FOR YOURSELF AND START THINKING ABOUT **HER**. NOT HER AS SOMETHING YOU **MISS** AND **WANT**, BUT JUST **HER**.
TAKE IT...
WHAT'S HAPPENING... TO ME... MY STOMACH...
WHAT'S...
...KATHY?

SHADE?
SHADE?
I'M SORRY. IT WAS THE ONLY WAY I COULD THINK OF TO SAVE MYSELF.
I KNEW HE'D WANT ME TO CHANGE BACK TO MARY-ANN, AND WOULD TRY TO **KILL** ME WHEN I WOULDN'T. I READ IT IN HIS THOUGHTS.
I COULDN'T STOP HIM TRYING TO KILL ME WITHOUT ALSO STOPPING HIM ANSWERING THE **RIDDLE**, GETTING RID OF THE SPHINX AND THE MADNESS.
I SWAPPED AS WE LEFT THE SPHINX...
SO I **SWAPPED**. BUT WHILE I WAS HIM I DIDN'T REALIZE I WAS REALLY **ME**, IF YOU GET MY MEANING. THE SAME AS WHEN WE REALLY THOUGHT WE WERE JFK AND THE FIRST LADY.
...TURNED MY BODY INTO HIS AND DUPLICATED HIS MIND. TURNED HIM INTO ME, GAVE HIM A COPY OF **MY** MIND...
YOU KNOW, I'VE A HORRIBLE FEELING THAT IF WE GET MUCH DEEPER INTO THIS MADNESS WE'RE GONNA END UP HAVING A **RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE**.
WHUPP WHUPP
AND I VOWED LONG AGO **NEVER** TO HAVE ONE OF **THOSE**.

DO NOT MOVE...
REPEAT... DO NOT MOVE...
CAN'T LET THEM CATCH YOU, SHADE. THEY STILL THINK YOU'RE GRENZER.
THEY'LL TRY TO EXECUTE YOU AGAIN...
WHERE DID WE LEAVE THE CAR?
SHADE! WHAT'RE YOU DOING?
I THINK I REMEMBER. I THINK GOING SO DEEP INTO THE MADNESS VEST HAS ACTIVATED SOMETHING...
MY HOME PLANET, META. THE MADNESS. PUTTING THE VEST ON... FLOATING...
SHADE? CHANGE BACK, SHADE...
OH, JESUS.

HELLO, KATHY. I'VE BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO MEETING YOU BOTH.
I THINK THIS COULD BE THE BEGINNING OF A BEAUTIFUL FRIENDSHIP.

[redacted]

ZOW!!
Windows of Deetko
McCARTHYISM 1990

MY MIND SPINS LIKE A SEVERED MOON, I'M FLOATING OUT OF ORBIT, OSCILLATING WILDLY THROUGH SPACE. ONE MINUTE I WAS IN DALLAS, NOW...
ALL SENSE GONE. I REACH OUT FOR SOMETHING SOLID AROUND WHICH I CAN GRAVITATE, ANYTHING, MY BEGINNING, YES, REMEMBER...
I REMEMBER LOOKING UP AT MAMA'S FACE AS SHE SANG ME A SONG TO SEND ME ASLEEP...
THINK, REMEMBER. I WAS A CHILD ONCE...
A STRANGE CHILD. AS YOUNG AS SEVEN I'D STARE AT SUNSETS AND SHED A FEW TEARS, THOUGH I COULDN'T SAY WHY...
TOO SENSITIVE, THEY SAID. I WORE A LOUD CRAVAT AND READ POETRY, NOT THE MODERN REGIMENTAL CHORIAMBIC QUATRAINS, BUT THE OLD...
...**PRE-SACRED LASER**. LOOSER, MORE PASSIONATE, MORE FLAWED...
AT THIRTEEN I FELL IN LOVE WITH ***RADHU***, A GIRL WITH FLAXEN HAIR.
I'D WAIT ALL DAY BY HER WINDOW FOR A GLIMPSE, HOLDING MY BREATH UNTIL I ALMOST FAINTED.

ONE NIGHT I STOLE INTO HER BEDROOM, SPELLBOUND AS THE DAWN SLOWLY PAINTED HER FACE. BUT MY RACING HEART MUST HAVE WOKEN HER...
AHHIEE! FATHER! FATHER! I'M BEING ATTACKED!
RADHU, BE QUIET, I'M ONLY LOOKING AT YOU. I LOVE YOU. I...
UHHFF
DOCTORS AND PRIESTS CONFERRED ON MY WORRISOME CASE. TOO DREAMY. TOO IMPULSIVE. TOO BAD.
IT WAS DECIDED THAT MY CONFIRMATION SHOULD BE BROUGHT FORWARD...
AH, MY CONFIRMATION! MOM SMILING AS THE HOLY SURGEON DIRECTS THE SACRED LASER INTO MY HEAD. CHASING OUT DEMONS AND YOUTHFUL MADNESS...
MAKING ME FIT TO BE AN ADULT...
AN ADULT, HEAD SPINNING ONCE MORE, A CRYING SUNSET...
A HELICOPTER'S BLADES AND A GIRL'S VOICE SHOUTING AND THE SMELL OF HOT TARMAC AS CONSCIOUSNESS RETURNS LIKE A DIZZY STORM...

AND...
MY GOD...
KATHY, WHAT'S...
NO!...
KATHYYYY!!!
I COME TO A STOP, AT LAST. WHERE AM I? A WORLD OF COLD MUD, SKY HEMORRHAGING FOUL-SMELLING RAIN, SLEET, SNOW...
BUT HOW DO I GET BACK? TO THE SHAPE OF MYSELF?
KATHY!
THERE **IS** NO WAY BACK.
THIS IS ***THE AREA OF MADNESS...***

MAD, BAD, AND DANGEROUS TO KNOW

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SHADE created by **STEVE DITKO**

AND I AM THE AMERICAN SCREAM. E PLURIBUS UNUM, OUT OF MANY, ONE...
GIVER OF VOICE AND FLESH TO THE QUIET SCREAMS OF UNQUIET MINDS...
AND WHAT QUIET SCREAMS, WHAT SLY BLISTERS OF MADNESS ARE LURKING WITHIN YOU, SHADE?
BEFORE I'M FINISHED, YOU WILL BE REDUCED TO NOTHING BUT A MOUTH, NO MEMORY, NO SOUL...
I DON'T BELIEVE YOU. THERE IS A WAY BACK...
...A FACELESS, MINDLESS MOUTH...
SCREAMING ALONE IN THE DARK AFTER TWILIGHT'S LAST GLEAMING FOR ALL TIME...
SHALL WE BEGIN?

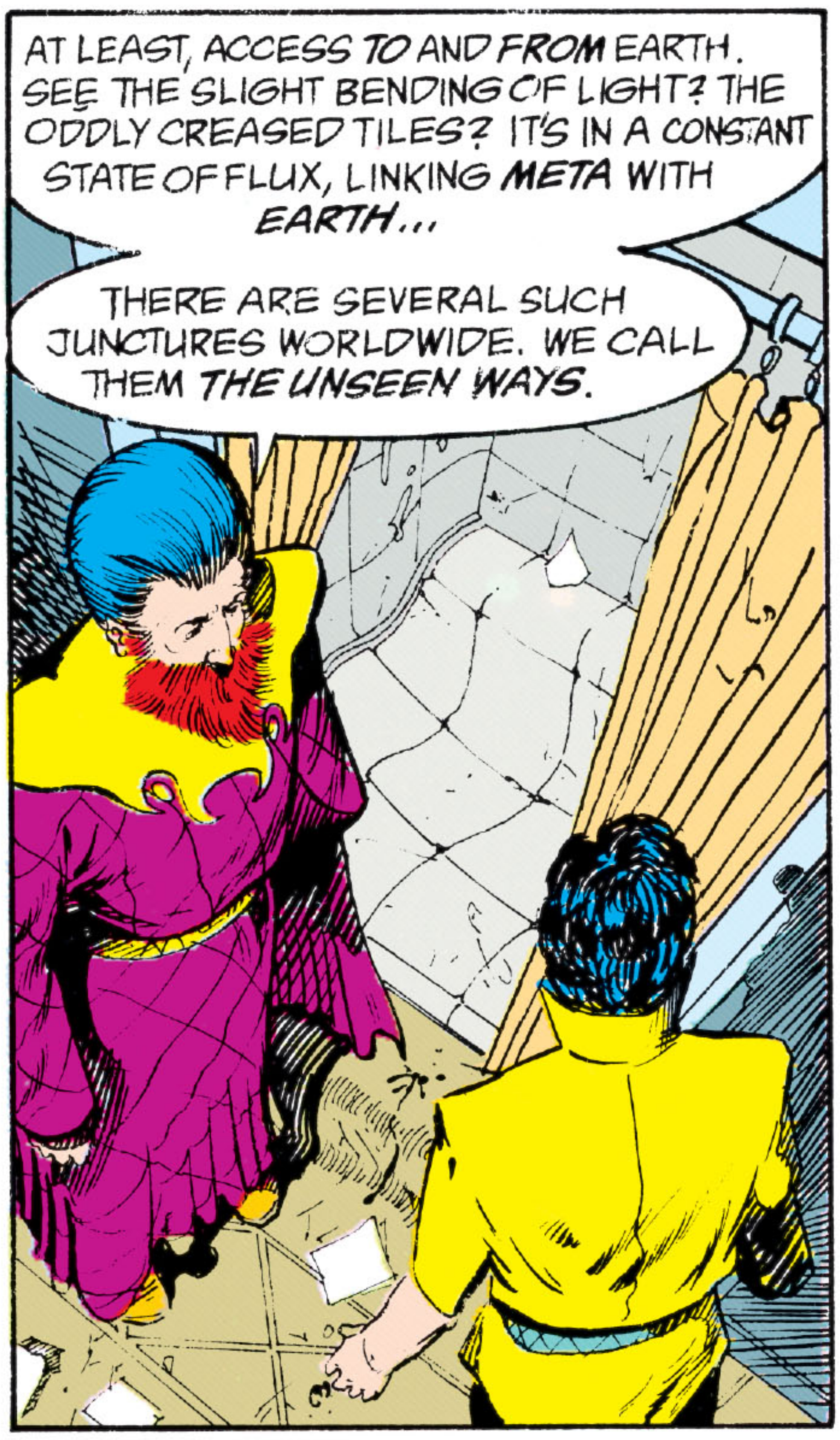
HEY. HEY, SHADE...
ARE YOU IN THERE?...
SHADE?
HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN IN THE AREA OF MADNESS?
HE EXPLAINED THAT TIME IS ABSOLUTE HERE, AN ETERNAL NOW EMBRACING PAST AND PRESENT...
BUT I STILL FEEL THE WEIGHT OF TIME AS I CRAWL, SEARCHING FOR THE DOOR OUT OF THE AREA.
IT FEELS LIKE A THOUSAND YEARS, GIVE OR TAKE A DECADE...
TEN CENTURIES PUMMELLED INCESSANTLY AND UNCHANGINGLY, BLIND NOW, MUD-CAKED EYES...
HE'S TRYING TO DRIVE ME MAD. HE'S SUCCEEDING.

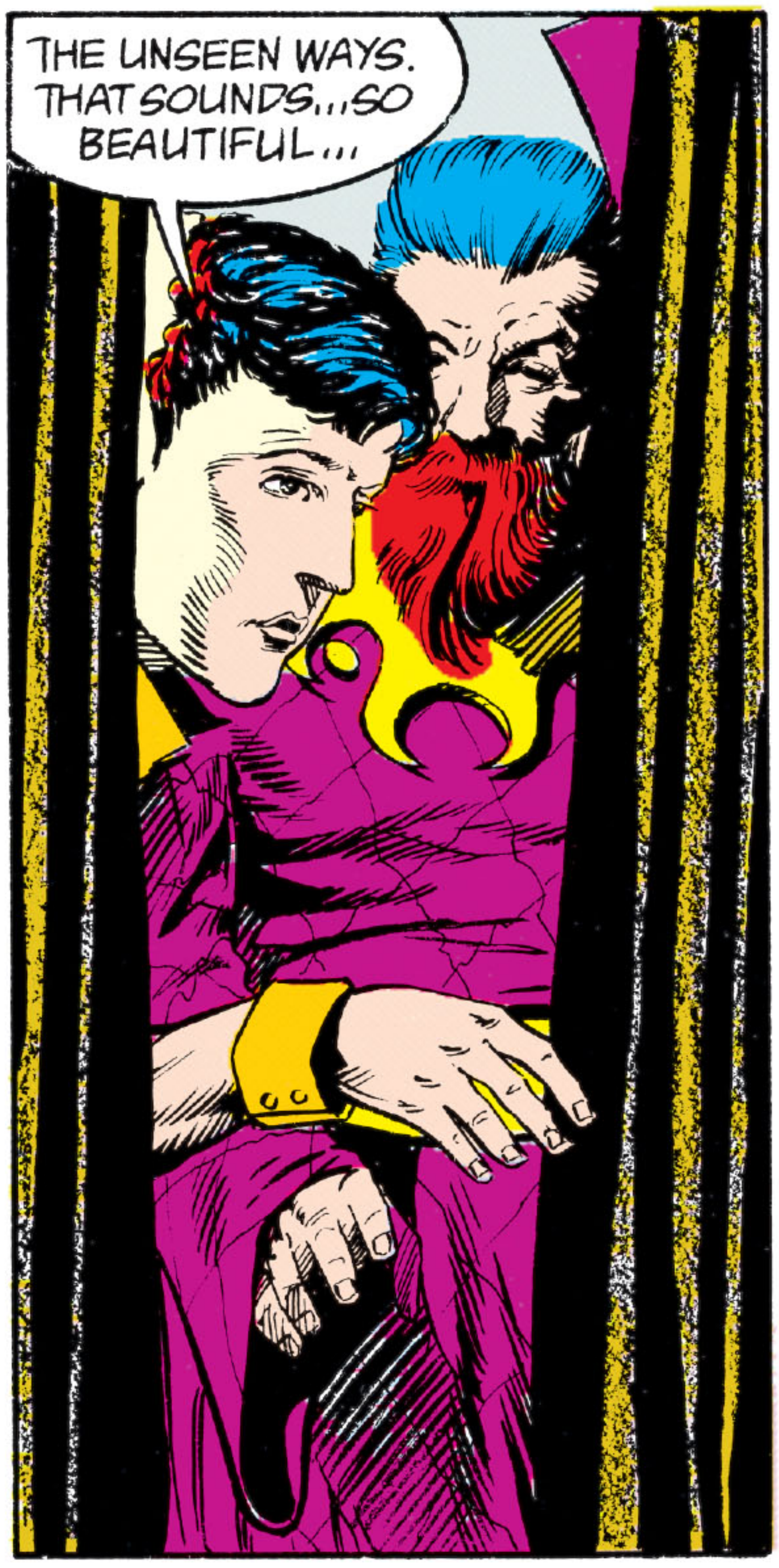
I TRIED FIGHTING, HARNESSED THE POWER OF THE **MADNESS VEST** TO GROW FISTS LIKE BOULDERS THAT I THREW AT HIM...
HE LAUGHED.
AND DISAPPEARED.
THEN HIS DISEMBODIED VOICE TOLD ME ABOUT THE AREA OF MADNESS...
THE NO-GO ZONES OF THE COLLECTIVE MIND, HE CALLED IT; THE PSYCHOGENIC EXTENSION OF **THE DARK SIDE**.
ONCE I KEPT MY MIND OCCUPIED BY HALLUCINATING. NOW I CAN NO LONGER DO EVEN THIS.
RAIN AND TIME HAVE WASHED AWAY MY IMAGINATION. THE MUD IS CAKING MY SOUL...
AND I COME TO REALIZE I **NEVER EXISTED**. HAVE NO **MEMORY**. AM **NOTHING**.
A BLIND AND MINDLESS MOUTH IN THE MUD.
SCREAMING IN THE DARK.
FOR ALL TIME...

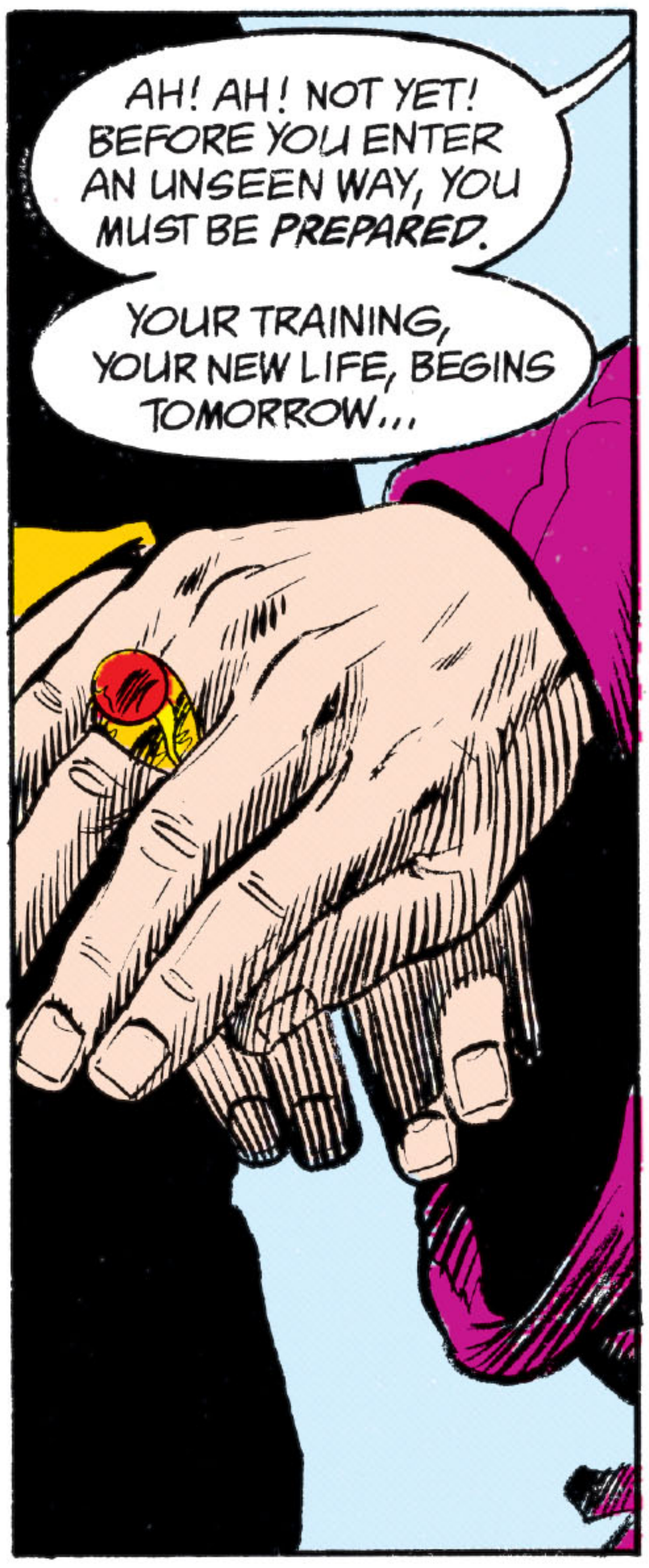
YOU CALLED HIM SHADE. WHO'S SHADE?
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO TROY GRENZER? HOW CAN A MAN TURN INTO A SOLID SILHOUETTE?
I KEEP TELLING YOU, GRENZER'S DEAD. THIS IS SHADE, BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HIM...
CAN YOU PLEASE TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON? I'VE BEEN HERE OVER THREE HOURS...
SHE'S GOT A POINT, SIR. LOCKED UP WITH THAT... THAT THING...
IT DOESN'T SEEM TO BOTHER HER, CONNOR. I'D SAY SHE SEEMED POSITIVELY FOND OF IT...
YOU CAN'T LEAVE ME ALONE NOW. I'VE GOT NOTHING TO GO BACK TO.
I KNOW IT SEEMS LIKE I HATE YOU SOMETIMES, BUT THAT'S ONLY NATURAL WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT.
YOU'RE ALL I'VE GOT LEFT, SHADE. HOW ABOUT THAT? IS THAT FUNNY OR WHAT?
SHADE...
COME BACK, SHADE...

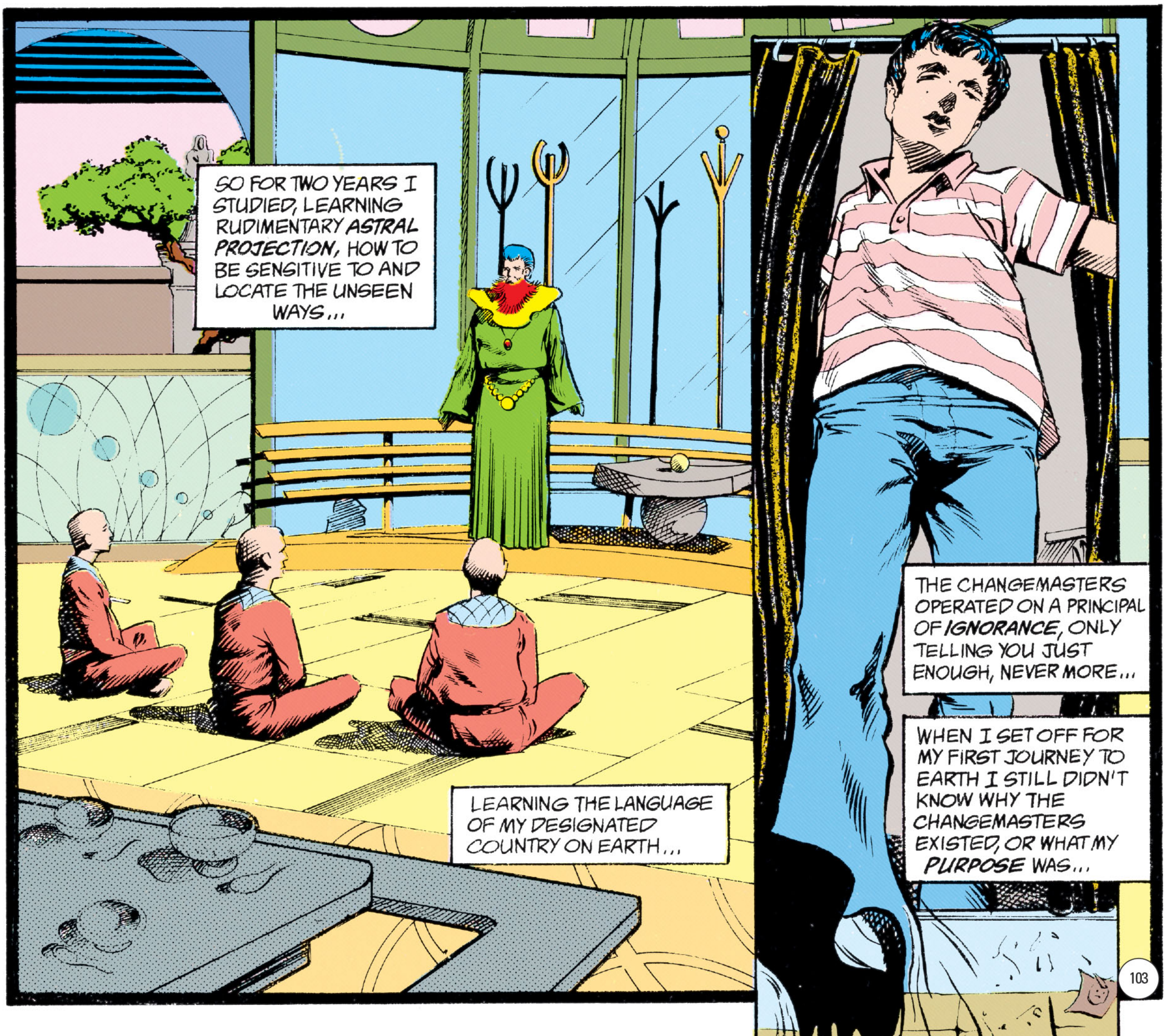
SHADE? COME BACK, SHADE?
OH GOD, THAT VOICE, HOT SALTY TEARS BURNING OPEN MY MUDDY EYES.
I LIFT MYSELF, MUD MAN, ME, SHADE. SHADE.
MUSTN'T LET HIM WIN. THAT SWEET VOICE. TELL A STORY WHILE YOU CRAWL TO KEEP YOURSELF SANE. YOUR CONFIRMATION. YES...
AS I FELT THE NOT UNPLEASANT BURNING IN MY SCALP, I IMAGINED SOCIETY BREATHING A COLLECTIVE SIGH OF RELIEF...
IMAGINED MYSELF A LITTLE MARTYR, A POET TRICKSTER...
I USED TO STARE AT FLOWERS, RAGE AT DEATH, CRY AT SUNSETS.
AFTER MY CONFIRMATION I WAS TOO SENSIBLE FOR THAT. I ENROLLED AT COLLEGE, TOOK MY OCCUPATIONAL PERSONALITY TEST, CRIED AT NO MORE SUNSETS...
I WAS A DULL LITTLE BASTARD, LIKE ALL THE OTHERS.
ONLY, NOT QUITE LIKE ALL THE OTHERS. I WAS EIGHTEEN...
REPORT TO THIS ADDRESS 9 A.M. TOMORROW. FAILURE TO COMPLY WILL NOT BE ACCEPTABLE.
AND DON'T SAY NOTHING OF THIS, NOT EVEN TO YOUR PARENTS...
I WAS AMUSED BY HIS DOUBLE NEGATIVE, AND POSITIVELY ENFLAMED BY THE DELICIOUS MYSTERY OF IT ALL...

THE SACRED LASER HAD NOT STEMMED **ALL** MY ROMANTIC LEANINGS...
WHAT DREAMS I HAD THE FOLLOWING DAY AS I MADE MY WAY THROUGH AN OLD QUARTER OF THE CITY TOWARDS MY PLACE OF ASSIGNATION!
HOW CRUSHED I FELT WHEN I ENTERED THE SHABBY, PROSAIC BASEMENT...
I'M **WIZOR**. A **CHANGEMASTER**. YOU WON'T HAVE HEARD OF US.
WE SCAN ALL OCCUPATIONAL PERSONALITY TEST OUTCOMES, COMPARING THEM TO A PARTICULAR ***PROFILE***...
YOU'RE ONE OF THE EXCEPTIONS WHO ***MATCHES*** OUR PROFILE ***PERFECTLY***. YOU HAVE THEREFORE BEEN RECRUITED AS A ***CHANGING MAN***, A ***MIND AGENT***.
HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF ***PLANET EARTH***?
EARTH? AH, NO. YES. I THINK SO. A CHILDREN'S BOOK? MAYBE A ***FAIRY TALE***...
WHAT'S ***EARTH*** GOT TO DO WITH...
EARTH IS NO FAIRY TALE, SHADE. EARTH ***EXISTS***.
IN FACT...
...EARTH IS RIGHT THERE BEHIND THE ***SHOWER CURTAIN***.


AT LEAST, ACCESS TO AND FROM EARTH. SEE THE SLIGHT BENDING OF LIGHT? THE ODDLY CREASED TILES? IT'S IN A CONSTANT STATE OF FLUX, LINKING META WITH EARTH...
THERE ARE SEVERAL SUCH JUNCTURES WORLDWIDE. WE CALL THEM THE UNSEEN WAYS.


THE UNSEEN WAYS. THAT SOUNDS...SO BEAUTIFUL...


AH! AH! NOT YET! BEFORE YOU ENTER AN UNSEEN WAY, YOU MUST BE PREPARED.
YOUR TRAINING, YOUR NEW LIFE, BEGINS TOMORROW...


SO FOR TWO YEARS I STUDIED, LEARNING RUDIMENTARY ASTRAL PROJECTION, HOW TO BE SENSITIVE TO AND LOCATE THE UNSEEN WAYS...
LEARNING THE LANGUAGE OF MY DESIGNATED COUNTRY ON EARTH...
THE CHANGEMASTERS OPERATED ON A PRINCIPAL OF IGNORANCE, ONLY TELLING YOU JUST ENOUGH, NEVER MORE...
WHEN I SET OFF FOR MY FIRST JOURNEY TO EARTH I STILL DIDN'T KNOW WHY THE CHANGEMASTERS EXISTED, OR WHAT MY PURPOSE WAS...

METANS COULD ONLY STAY ON EARTH THREE HOURS BEFORE AUTOMATICALLY RETURNING TO THEIR JUNCTURE OF DEPARTURE...
BUT I WAS HAPPY. MY LIFE LIKE A POEM, WHOSE METER, RHYME SCHEME, CADENCES, AND LAYERS OF MEANING HAD TO BE UNRAVELLED...
THIS PROBLEM WOULD EVENTUALLY HAVE A PROFOUND EFFECT ON MY LIFE.
MY FIRST TRIPS I SPENT SEEKING OUT POETRY. HOW I LOVED EARTH! THE LITERATURE, THE ART, THE WOMEN...
ITS WILDNESS, ITS CHAOS, ITS LIFE...
YOUR LIFE WILL NOW CHANGE, MY SON. FOR THE NEXT YEAR YOUR MOVEMENTS WILL BE RESTRICTED.
STRANGE DAYS ARE APPROACHING. DAYS OF CHANGE.
IT WILL BE YOUR TASK TO SEE THAT THESE CHANGES ARE NOT HARMFUL TO META...
WIZOR, YOU'VE BEEN MY TEACHER FOR TWO YEARS, BUT THERE'S SO MUCH I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHAT IS EARTH?
HOW ARE EARTH AND META RELATED?

I'VE HEARD TALK OF AN AREA OF MADNESS, BETWEEN EARTH AND META. SOME OF OUR AGENTS FALL INTO IT, NEVER RETURNING.
AND WHAT DO WE AGENTS DO, ANYWAY? NO ONE TELLS ME ANYTHING!
WE'D RATHER YOU DISCOVER AND WORK OUT THINGS FOR YOURSELF. THIS WILL GIVE YOU GREATER FLEXIBILITY OF THOUGHT AND ACTION.
I'LL SAY ONLY THAT THERE ARE NO SACRED LASERS ON EARTH. HUMANS HARBOR A MADNESS, THE AREA OF MADNESS IS A PRODUCT OF THIS, ONLY MUTATED...
AND THIS IS A THREAT TO US ALL. IT'S LEAKING INTO OUR OWN PLANET.
AND THAT'S ALL I GOT, EVER. FOR THE NEXT YEAR I WAS KEPT LOCKED UP OR FOLLOWED OR PROHIBITED FROM CERTAIN AREAS.
MY FIANCÉE, MELLU, WAS OFTEN MY ONLY COMFORT. PRETTY, HAPPY MELLU...
I MANAGED ONCE TO GET AN OLDER MIND AGENT DRUNK, IN A BAR OF SHADOWS AFTER LOSING MY OWN SHADOWS...
WHAT D'WE DO? WE'RE WALKING SACRED LASERS, BOY. WE GET TO EARTH, FIND SOMEONE WHO SEEMS A LITTLE MAD... AND THEN...
...OPERATE...
A BIT CRUDE, OF COURSE. PLACE A DEPRESSOR AGAINST THEIR TEMPLES. PULL THE TRIGGER. FZZZZT.
PATIENT'S A LITTLE STUPID, A LOT OF HIS WIRING'S MELTED, BUT HE'S SANE...
MY GOD. THAT'S TERRIBLE...

THAT WAS THE LAST I SAW OF HIM...
FOR THE NEXT THREE MONTHS I WAS **CONFINED** TO **QUARTERS...**
AND THEN CAME THE NIGHT. ***THE NIGHT OF THE INSANE SKY.***
WE WATCHED IT FROM OUR WINDOW AND IT WAS AS THOUGH MY OWN TURMOIL WAS BEING PROJECTED ONTO THE HEAVENS...
RUMORS REACHED ME THAT AN ***AGENT*** HAD BEEN RETRIEVED FROM THE ***AREA OF MADNESS***, AND THE NIGHT OF THE INSANE SKY WAS ***HIS*** DOING...
AND THEN WIZOR, WHO I HADN'T SEEN FOR THREE MONTHS, APPEARED...
THE TIME IS NOW, SHADE. WE'VE DEVISED A WAY TO KEEP AN AGENT ON EARTH INDEFINITELY.
YOU'LL STAY THERE FOR THREE MONTHS AND FIGHT THE MADNESS. AFTER THAT YOU'LL RETURN TO META, FREE TO DO WHAT YOU WISH...
I'LL HAVE TO SPEAK WITH ***MELLU*** FIRST. AND MY PARENTS. I HAVEN'T SEEN THEM FOR...
NO TIME, SHADE. WE MUST GO NOW...

I MUST HAVE BEEN DRUGGED THAT MORNING. I WENT ALONG LIKE A ZOMBIE TO THE *DEEP CULTURE TANK*.
WISOR TOLD ME I'D BE SENT TO *THE AREA OF MADNESS*, FROM WHERE I'D TAKE OVER A *HUMAN BODY*...
LEAVE YOUR BODY USING YOUR ASTRAL PROJECTION. NO FEAR, YOUR REAL BODY WILL BE *PERFECTLY SAFE*, AWAITING YOUR RETURN.
A HUMAN HAS BEEN CHOSEN WHO'D DIE ANYWAY. A CONVICTED KILLER CALLED *GRENZER*. WE KNOW HOW *SENSITIVE* YOU ARE.
I SPENT AN HOUR IN THE TANK, IMMERSED IN SUBLIMINAL POOLS OF INFORMATION...
...A RAPID TIDE OF VOICES, SOUNDS, PICTURES, SMELLS SURGING THROUGH THE RIVERS OF MY NEUROSCAPE...
...AMERICA RUN THROUGH ME UNTIL I COULD THINK, BREATHE AND SPEAK LIKE AN AMERICAN.
THIS WAS DESIGNED FOR YOU, TO BECOME PART OF YOUR LIFEFORCE, DISTINCT FROM YOUR CORPOREAL BODY.
THE *MADNESS VEST*. IT WILL GIVE YOU THE *POWER* OF *EXTERNALIZED MADNESS*.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND...
THE MADNESS IS CONTAGIOUS, SHADE. YOU MUST FIGHT IT.
BE A POET OF INSANITY. CREATE FREE VERSE WITH REALITY, ON THE SMITHY OF YOUR SOUL. YOU LIKE USING THAT TERM.
FORGE WHATEVER CHANGE IS NEEDED ON THE SMITHY OF YOUR SOUL...

AS SOON AS THE VEST WAS ATTACHED TO ME, LIGHTS EXPLODED, THERE WERE THOUGHTS LIKE BOMBS, SCREAMING EVERYWHERE, I WAS IN THE AREA OF MADNESS...
AND NOW YOU'RE BACK IN IT...
YOU LEFT YOUR BODY, ENTERED THE BODY OF TROY GRENZER AS HE SAT ON THE ELECTRIC CHAIR...
YOU REALLY ARE SURPRISING, SHADE. STRONGER WILLED THAN I THOUGHT.
HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO BREAK YOUR MIND, HMMM?
PERHAPS FIRST WE SHOULD BREAK YOUR BODY...
A POET OF INSANITY. LEAP INTO THE DARK, FORGE WHATEVER CHANGE IS NEEDED...
YES. YES.
CHANGE...
...YOURSELF, SCREAM.
LOOK AT YOURSELF AND SCREAM...

BOUGHT A FEW SECONDS. ALL I NEED. CREATE THE DOORWAY. **THINK** IT. MAKE IT **REAL**...
THE SHAPE OF MYSELF...
MUD?
SHADE, ARE **YOU** DOING THIS?
LITTLE ROMANTIC SHIT. SENSITIVE CRAP CHILD. POET OF PISS. IF WE'RE TALKING "LOOKING AT YOURSELF AND SCREAMING"...
GET A LOAD OF **THIS**...
MY BODY, MY REAL BODY IN THE AREA OF MADNESS...
IT **CAN'T** BE. IT'S ROTTEN... **DECAYED...**
IDIOT. THE CHANGEMASTERS **BETRAYED** YOU. WIZOR **CONDEMNED** YOU. YOUR REAL BODY IS **DEAD.** YOU'VE NO WAY BACK.
YOU'RE STUCK FOREVER IN THE BODY OF **TROY GRENZER**, MASS KILLER. YOUR **SENSITIVE SOUL** WRAPPED IN A **BUTCHER'S APRON**.
SEE? TROY GRENZER'S STILL **PART** OF YOU. SO ARE ALL HIS **VICTIMS**.
MY GOD...

SIR! SHE'S GONE!
SHE CAN'T BE GONE, CONNOR, SHE...
DAMN IT!
SHADE?!
HER VOICE, CALLING ME BACK FROM DESPAIR. THE POWER OF MADNESS. THE POWER OF LOVE, SWEET BIRD OF YOUTH...
THE *SMITHY OF MY SOUL*...

SHADE, ARE YOU...?
ONLY A FEW SECONDS. **THE SCREAM** WILL BE BACK...
MY SHAPE...
QUICK, IT'S *FADING...*
THANK YOU. IF YOU HADN'T COME... I'D HAVE LOST MY MIND.
YEAH. I MUST'VE LOST MINE.
WHERE THE HELL **ARE** WE, ANYWAY? THIS ISN'T ***DALLAS!***
TSKK.
WE'RE ABOUT TWO HUNDRED MILES WEST OF ***PHOENIX***. ROOM'S TWENTY BUCKS A NIGHT, TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT.
RESTAURANT
LAST CHANCE GAS
MOTEL ARIZONA
93 ARIZO
SPEED 35 LIMIT
WANT ANY GROCERIES, JUST HOLLER. I CAN GIT YOU LIQUOR TOO, ON THE QUIET.
YOU **SURE** YOU'RE OKAY, MISTER?

DON'T MIND MY **HUSBAND**. IT'S HOW THEY'RE DRESSING IN **NEW YORK** THIS YEAR.
GUESS I'M JUS' OLD FASHIONED, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S BIN ROLLED IN A PILE OF PIG SHIT TO ME.
AS WE ENTER THE ROOM WE BOTH LOOK AT THE ONE DOUBLE BED STARING RUDELY BACK AT US...
WE SAY NOTHING. TOO TIRED. SHE FALLS ONTO THE BED, I DISINTEGRATE INTO A CHAIR, DRY MUD CLINGING TO ME LIKE OLD HABITS.
INSTANTLY MY HEAD SPINS WARMLY INTO SLEEP, MY MIND A RAW GRAZE.
I'M IN A MOTEL ROOM WITH KATHY, I CAN HEAR HER HEAVY SLEEP.
AND I SMILE, AS A MAN MIGHT SMILE LOOKING ROUND THE RUINS OF HIS HOUSE...
...AND FINDING SOMETHING HE THOUGHT HE'D LOST LONG, LONG AGO...

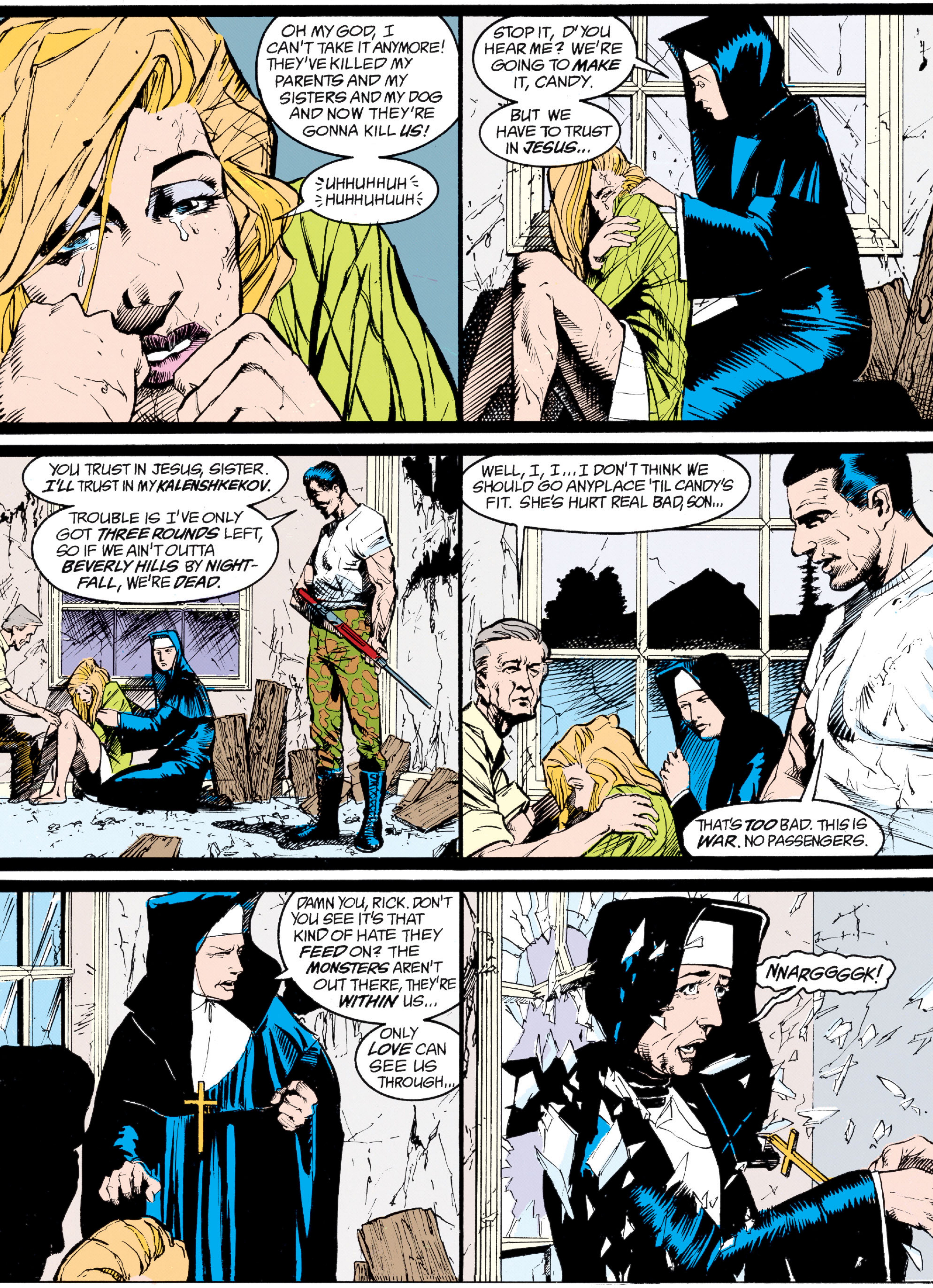
JEEZ, MY LIGHTS WENT OUT SOON AS I SMELLED THOSE SHEETS.
WHO WAS THAT **AMERICAN SCREAM** CREEP, ANYWAY...?
IN YOUR MIDDLE AGES **THE GRIM REAPER** WAS A PERSONIFICATION OF **DEATH** AND THE **GREAT PLAGUE**...
I THINK THE **AMERICAN SCREAM** IS THE PERSONIFICATION OF THE PLAGUE OF **MADNESS** SWEEPING THE STATES. ONLY HE'S **REAL**.
SAID SOMETHING 'BOUT YOU BEING BETRAYED. SOMEONE CALLED **WIZOR** CONDEMNED YOU...
YES. ACTUALLY, I'D RATHER NOT TALK ABOUT THAT, JUST YET.
WELL ACTUALLY, I'D RATHER YOU **WOULD**.
BEFORE I GET INVOLVED WITH A MAN, I LIKE TO KNOW AS MUCH ABOUT HIM AS POSSIBLE.
INVOLVED?
SHIT, THAT'S WHAT'S GOING TO **HAPPEN**, ISN'T IT? IT **SHOULDN'T**. IT'S **CRAZY**. BUT I ALWAYS KNOW. I'VE A KINDA **INTERNAL ALARM**. IT'S RINGING LIKE MAD NOW.
MY MOTHER ALWAYS **SAID** I WAS CRAZY.
WHAT WAS YOUR MOTHER LIKE? LIKE YOU? AS **BEAUTIFUL**?
JESUS, WHO ARE YOU KIDDING?
PEOPLE **SAID** WE WERE ALIKE. SHE WAS KINDA STUBBORN. A BIT OF A **WILD STREAK**, I GUESS.

I'M SORRY, STILL CAN'T TALK ABOUT HER WITHOUT BREAKING UP...
YOU'RE CHANGING THE SUBJECT, ANYHOW. WHY WERE YOU *BETRAYED?*
WHEN I WAS GIVEN THE MADNESS VEST IT BECAME PART OF MY *SOUL OR LIFEFORCE* OR WHATEVER YOU WANT TO CALL IT...
I THINK IT AUTOMATICALLY TRANSPORTED ME INTO THE AREA OF MADNESS.
MY MASTERS TOLD ME I HAD TO LEAVE MY BODY THERE AND TAKE OVER A *HUMAN BODY.* THE POWER OF THE VEST WOULD STAY WITH MY LIFEFORCE.
IT WAS ONLY GOING TO BE FOR THREE MONTHS, THEN I WAS GOING TO RETURN TO MY REAL BODY, GO HOME...
BUT MY REAL BODY'S *DEAD.* A *LIFELESS CORPSE* FLOATING IN THE AREA.
SO I'M STUCK HERE, IN GRENZER'S BODY. NO WAY HOME.
KATHY?

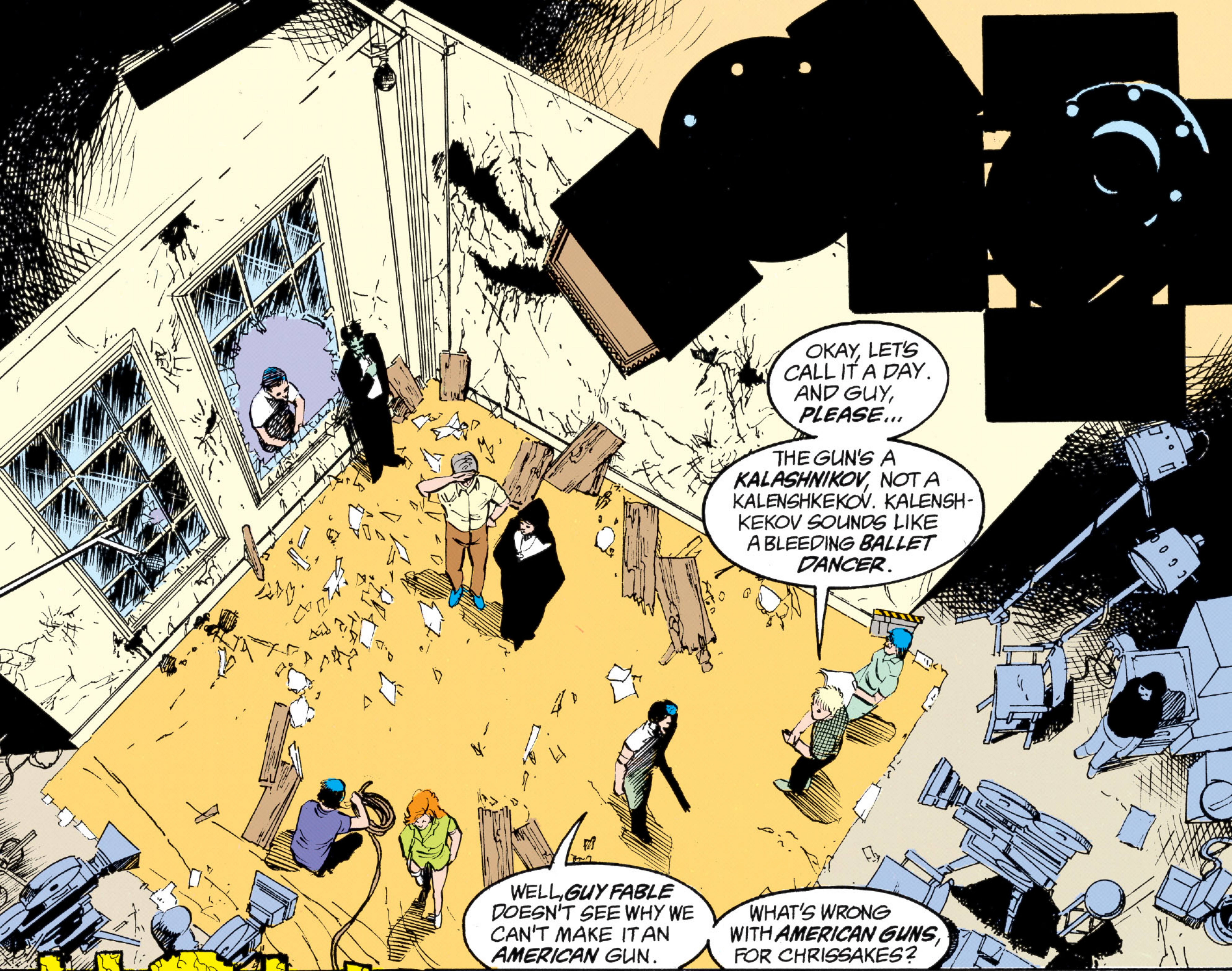
HEY... KATHY...
IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO?
UH UH. IT'S OKAY. I'LL BE OKAY IN A MINUTE.
GUESS WE'RE **BOTH** ALONE, HUH?
IT'S FUNNY, YOU REMIND ME OF A GIRL I KNEW, CALLED RADHU.
I HAVEN'T FELT THIS WAY SINCE MY CONFIRMATION. EVEN WITH **MELLU**, MY FIANCÉE...
WAS SHE NICE? MELLU, I MEAN.
MOST PEOPLE ON META ARE **NICE**. THERE'S LOVE ON META, BUT WITHOUT HIS WINGS.
HEY, I **KNOW** THAT LINE! IT'S **BYRON**, ISN'T IT? AHH, FRIENDSHIP IS LOVE... WITHOUT HIS WINGS!
HOW DO YOU KNOW BYRON?
I'VE READ AS MUCH EARTH POETRY AS I CAN. IT'S CLOSE TO OUR OWN **PRE-SACRED LASER** VERSE...
WHAT'S WRONG?
YOUR **HAIR**!

MY GOD. I'VE GOT MY HAIR BACK! MY OLD HAIR!
IT'S INCREDIBLE!
MORE THAN I CAN SAY FOR YOUR CLOTHES. THEY'RE RUINED.
WHY NOT MAKE YOURSELF SOME MORE? IF YOU CAN DO ALL THAT OTHER SHIT, A FEW CLOTHES SHOULDN'T BE A PROBLEM.
I HADN'T THOUGHT. GO POUR ME A DRINK, PLEASE. I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN FORGE... ON THE SEWING MACHINE OF MY SOUL...
THAT COP OR WHOEVER HE IS THAT PICKED US UP IN DALLAS. CALLED STRINGER. VERY WEIRD.
HE JUST WATCHED ME, LIKE HE WAS WAITING FOR SOMETHING...
I DON'T THINK IT'S THE LAST TIME WE'LL...
DON'T LAUGH. IT ISN'T TOO OSTENTATIOUS, IS IT?
IT'S ALL I COULD MANAGE AND MAINTAIN FOR MORE THAN A FEW SECONDS. IT'S LIKE THE STUFF I USED TO WEAR, BEFORE I BECAME AN OLD FART.
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
HMMM...
I GUESS IT'LL HAVE TO DO.

THE NIGHTS IN ARIZONA ARE COLD BUT BEAUTIFUL. WE SIT QUITE STILL, SAYING LITTLE.
GOD KNOWS HOW WE ENDED UP HERE, AND NOT BACK IN DALLAS.
I'VE TOLD HER ALL I CAN TELL HER. SHE THINKS I'M HOLDING STUFF BACK. I'M NOT. I JUST DON'T KNOW THAT MUCH.
WE STEAL OCCASIONAL LOOKS AT EACH OTHER, FLASH QUICK SMILES, BOTH EMBARRASSED NOW. WE CAME TOO CLOSE, WE SPOKE TOO OPENLY.
WE HAVE TO PULL BACK, LET THINGS TAKE THEIR OWN TIME.
I TRY NOT TO THINK ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENED OR WHAT WILL HAPPEN OR ABOUT TROY GRENZER OR SHADE OR THE AMERICAN SCREAM.
I TRY TO BE A PIECE OF THE SCENERY, AS STILL AS THE MOUNTAINS OR THE SKY.
I LOOK AT THE DYING SUN, BLEEDING OVER THE ROUGH HORIZON, REMEMBERING SUNSETS ON META, WHEN I WAS YOUNG...
IT ALMOST MAKES ME WANT TO CRY.
END

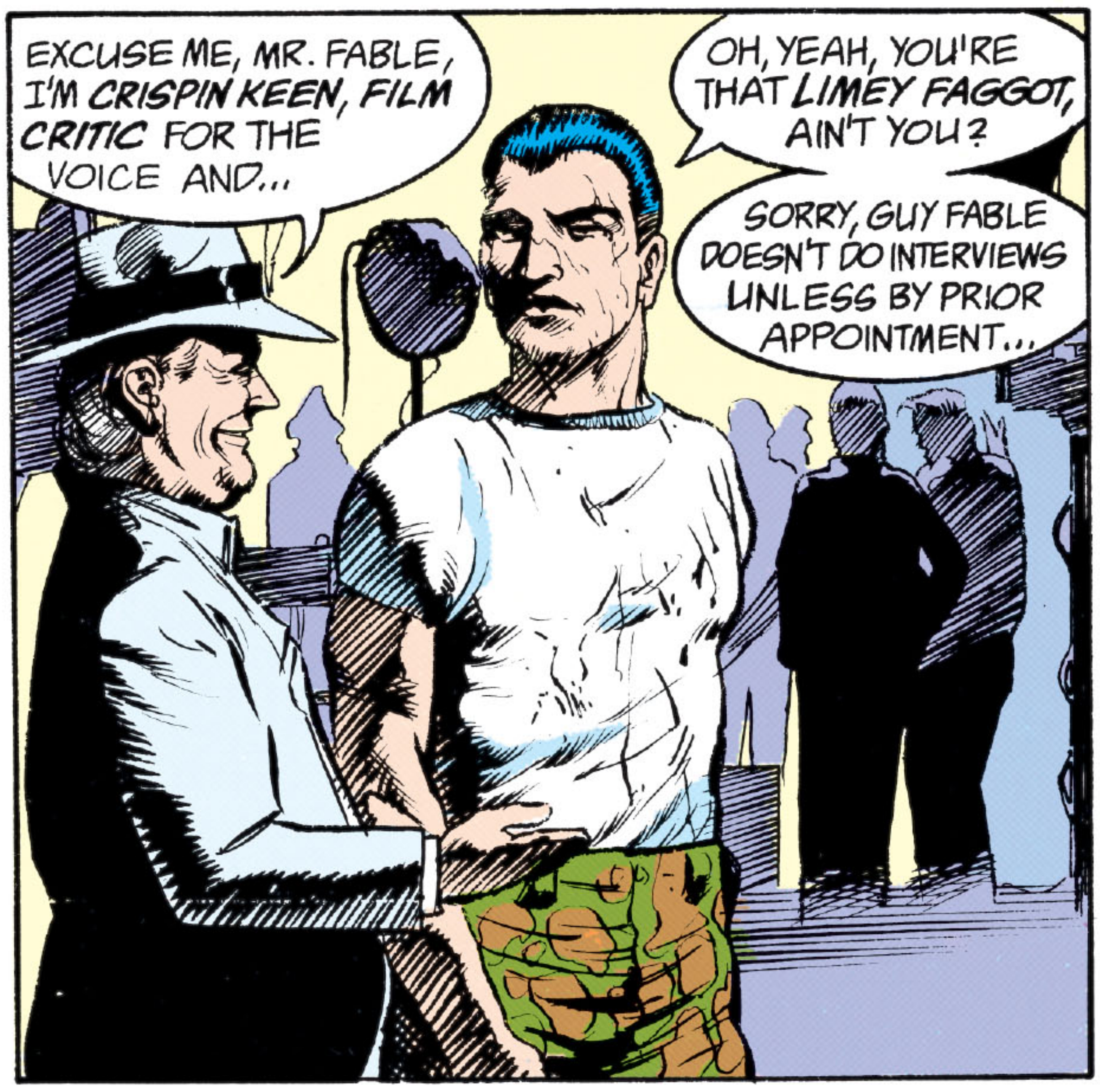

OH MY GOD, I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE! THEY'VE KILLED MY PARENTS AND MY SISTERS AND MY DOG AND NOW THEY'RE GONNA KILL *US!*
UHHUHHUH HUHHUHUUH
STOP IT, D'YOU HEAR ME? WE'RE GOING TO *MAKE* IT, CANDY.
BUT WE HAVE TO TRUST IN *JESUS*...
YOU TRUST IN JESUS, SISTER. *I'LL* TRUST IN MY *KALENSHKEKOV.*
TROUBLE IS I'VE ONLY GOT *THREE ROUNDS* LEFT, SO IF WE AIN'T OUTTA *BEVERLY HILLS* BY *NIGHTFALL*, WE'RE *DEAD.*
WELL, I, I... I DON'T THINK WE SHOULD GO ANYPLACE 'TIL CANDY'S FIT. SHE'S HURT REAL BAD, SON...
THAT'S *TOO* BAD. THIS IS *WAR*. NO PASSENGERS.
DAMN YOU, RICK. DON'T YOU SEE IT'S THAT KIND OF HATE THEY *FEED* ON? THE *MONSTERS* AREN'T OUT THERE, THEY'RE *WITHIN* US...
ONLY *LOVE* CAN SEE US THROUGH...
NNARGGGGK!

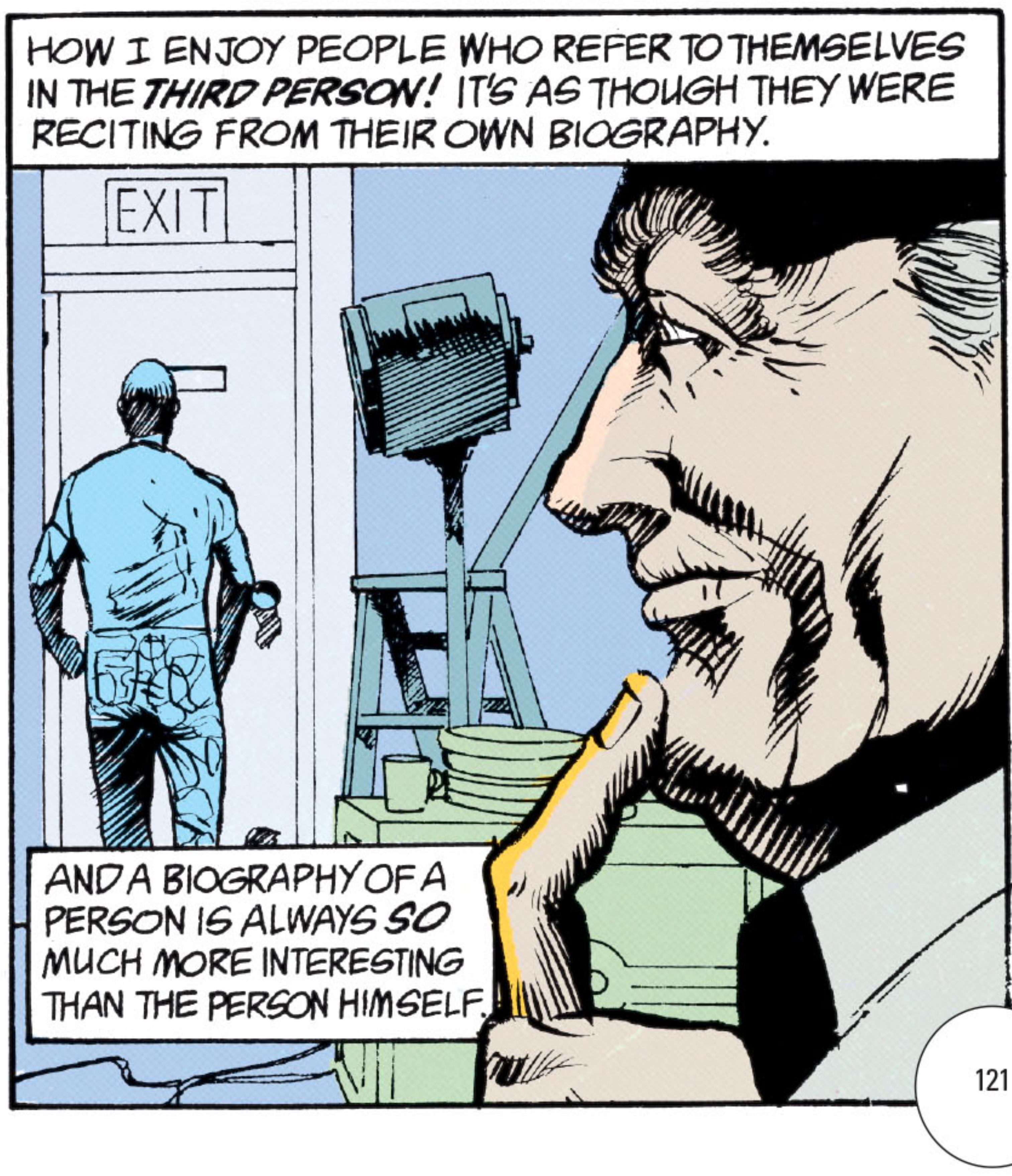
HOLY... IT LOOKS LIKE, LIKE... CHARLIE CHAPLIN...!
GIT DOWN, SISTER, I CAN'T SHOOT IT 'LESS YOU GIT DOWN!
BLAMM
YOU COULD'VE **KILLED** ME, BUT YOU DIDN'T **CARE** SO LONG AS YOU POTTED THAT... **THING**!
SO WHAT'S IT TO YOU WHETHER YOU DIE OR NOT? YOU'RE GOING TO **HEAVEN**, AIN'T YOU, SISTER?
WHY NOT ADMIT YOU'RE A **WOMAN**, WITH A WOMAN'S **NEEDS**? I SEEN HOW YOU **LOOK** AT ME...
TH-TH-THEY'RE... THEY'RE COMING...
WELL, I'LL BE DARNED GOTTA BE THREE HUNDRED **HOLLYWOOD MONSTERS** OUT THERE.
THERE'S CAGNEY, GABLE, BOGART...
WE MUST BE THE LAST **NORMAL** PEOPLE LEFT IN BEVERLY KILLS.
I MEAN **HILLS**...
CUT!


OKAY, LET'S CALL IT A DAY. AND GUY, *PLEASE*...
THE GUN'S A *KALASHNIKOV*, NOT A KALENSHKEKOV. KALENSHKEKOV SOUNDS LIKE A BLEEDING *BALLET DANCER*.
WELL, *GUY FABLE* DOESN'T SEE WHY WE CAN'T MAKE IT AN *AMERICAN* GUN.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH *AMERICAN GUNS*, FOR CHRISSAKES?

HOLLYWOOD BABBLE ON

PETER MILLIGAN: WRITER
CHRIS BACHALO: PENCILLER
MARK PENNINGTON: INKER
DANIEL VOZZO: COLORS
TODD KLEIN: LETTERS
TOM PEYER: ASST. ED.
KAREN BERGER: EDITOR
CREATED BY STEVE DITKO


EXCUSE ME, MR. FABLE, I'M *CRISPIN KEEN, FILM CRITIC* FOR THE VOICE AND...
OH, YEAH, YOU'RE THAT *LIMEY FAGGOT*, AIN'T YOU?
SORRY, GUY FABLE DOESN'T DO INTERVIEWS UNLESS BY PRIOR APPOINTMENT...


HOW I ENJOY PEOPLE WHO REFER TO THEMSELVES IN THE *THIRD PERSON!* IT'S AS THOUGH THEY WERE RECITING FROM THEIR OWN BIOGRAPHY.
EXIT
AND A BIOGRAPHY OF A PERSON IS ALWAYS *SO* MUCH MORE INTERESTING THAN THE PERSON HIMSELF.

I'M ON THE SET OF **HOLLYWOOD MONSTERS**, DIRECTED BY BRITISH **ENFANT TERRIBLE ED LOOT**, A MAN WHO IS TO THE **CINEMA** WHAT **GARLIC** IS TO **HALITOSIS**.
BUT WHENCE COMES HIS MAGIC TOUCH?
ED KNOWS THAT AMERICA IS ONLY INTERESTED IN TIGHT SKIN, LOUD MUSIC, BIG GUNS AND BIG CARS.
BUT HE ALSO KNOWS WE LIKE TO PRETEND **DIFFERENT**. SO HE GIVES US JUST ENOUGH **ART** TO MAKE US FEEL **GOOD** ABOUT OURSELVES.
I SEE. CHEESEBURGERS WITH A SOUPÇON OF **CAVIAR**.
CANDICE FLOWERS IS AN **ACTRESS**. IF THE **QUEEN OF ENGLAND** BURNT HER BRA, TOOK TO THE STAGE, AND READ NOTHING BUT **SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR**, SHE PROBABLY **STILL** WOULDN'T TALK LIKE CANDICE FLOWERS.
THIS IS AN IMPORTANT FILM. MONSTER COMES FROM THE LATIN *MONERE*, TO WARN. ED'S WARNING US ABOUT THE MONSTERS INSIDE THE PREDOMINANTLY WHITE MALE-RUN SOCIETY...
HE'S USING THE HORROR GENRE IN A VERY... A VERY **BRECHTIAN** WAY. THE **SUBTEXT** IS...
KENT HARTON HAS THE FACE OF A GOOD-NATURED SEA ANEMONE. HE TALKS ABOUT HIS WIFE AND FAMILY AND SPINS SIMPLE HOME TRUTHS.
EXIT
HE MAKES **JIMMY STEWART** LOOK LIKE A DEATH CAMP KOMMANDANT.
EMERALD DARLING IS THE RISING STARLET OF HOLLYWOOD, RUMORED TO HAVE HAD **SILICONE IMPLANTS** IN HER LIPS TO IMPROVE HER POUT.
HER SUCCESS LIES IN PORTRAYING TO PERFECTION THAT HETEROSEXUAL MALE FANTASY; THE **VIRGIN SLUT**.

HE'S SUCH A WANKER! GUY FABLE SAYS THIS, GUY FABLE SAYS THAT. IS HE NUTS OR WHAT?
IT'S JUST HIS WAY. HE MIGHT BE THE BIGGEST AND MADDEST BASTARD IN HOLLYWOOD, BUT THE PEOPLE LOVE HIM.
THEY BETTER STAY LOVING HIM. IF "MONSTERS" TURKEYS, IT COULD BE ANOTHER "HEAVEN'S GATE."
AND BRING DOWN THE STUDIO? THAT'D BE A GIGGLE, WOULDN'T IT?
'ERE, I WANT A SPEECH COACH FOR EMERALD. HOW THE HELL DID I GET LUMBERED WITH HER ANYWAY?
AW, STRICTLY BETWEEN YOU AND ME, EDWARD, SHE WAS... NICE TO THE RIGHT PEOPLE. SHE'S AMBITIOUS AS HELL, YOU KNOW.
YEAH, I HEARD SHE'D SCREW A HORSE IF IT MEANT ACTING WITH BRANDO...
HOLLYWOOD MONSTER
IF IT'D HELP HER CAREER SHE'D SCREW BRANDO IF IT MEANT ACTING WITH A HORSE.
THIS IS STRICTLY BETWEEN YOU AND ME, YOU UNDERSTAND.
SURE, WILLIAM. THESE PEOPLE SHE WAS NICE TO. YOU WOULDN'T BE AMONG THEM, BY ANY CHANCE?
I TAKE THAT AS AN INSULT, EDWARD. A FILTHY, DEFAMATORY, DISGUSTING SLUR ON MY GOOD NAME AS A HUSBAND AND FATHER...
HOW WAS SHE?
PHENOMENAL.
CAN I SEE THE RUSHES WITH YOU? I AM ONE OF THE GODDAMN PRODUCERS...
YOU KNOW HOW I WORK. ONLY I SEE THE RUSHES ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS.
RIGHT TO DIE
YOU SEE THEM END OF THE WEEK. IF YOU DON'T LIKE WHAT YOU SEE, THAT'S THE TIME TO FIRE ME!

WHAT A THOUGHT! **HIM,** SCREWING **EMERALD DARLING!** MUST LOOK LIKE A JELLY FISH MOUNTING THE VENUS DE MILO.
HAVE TO WATCH MESELF WITH WILLIAM. HE COMES ON ALL **MATEY,** BUT HE'S A **NASTY** LITTLE SHIT AT HEART.
JFK IN DA
LIKE **ME.**
SNNFFF
ARRRRHHH. BETTER. MUCH.
NOW LET'S TAKE A BUTCHERS AT WHAT **ED THE GENIUS** HAS CREATED.
OH GOD, MISTER ALL-AMERICAN MALE MACHO MAN KALENSHKEKOV HIMSELF.
THAT'S NICE, THOUGH. **VERY** NICE.
BUGGER IT, WHY DOES **EMERALD** HAVE TO **POUT** ALL THE BLOODY TIME AND...
...**WHAT** IS **THAT??**

I DIDN'T SHOOT THAT. IT'S IMPOSSIBLE, I...
HOLD ON, I'VE **SEEN** THAT BASTARD BEFORE. THE PAPER. HE'S IN THE PAPER...
YEAH. ARTIST'S IMPRESSION OF THIS ***OPTICAL ILLUSION*** SEEN IN TEXAS.
Los Angeles Times
JFK IS ALIVE?
BUT HOW DID IT GET INTO MY BLOODY FILM?
WAIT A MINUTE. ***THINK***, EDDIE. IF SOMETHING ***WEIRD***, SOMETHING ***PARANORMAL*** HAS HAPPENED TO YOUR FILM...
...WHO ***CARES*** HOW IT'S HAPPENING?!
"THE ***MOVIE*** THAT MADE ***ITSELF***"! "THE HAUNTED FILM"! IT'LL BE A ***SENSATION!***
UH OH, IT'S ***SHRINKING*** NOW, IN FRONT OF FABLE...
THIS IS BIZARRE. WHY'S IT TURNED INTO A LITTLE KID?
FABLE'S LOOKING PRETTY SPACED-OUT, TOO. WHAT'S HE DOING TO HER...?
SHE'S RUNNING. HE'S TRYING TO STOP HER...
GRABBING HOLD OF HER, SHE'S STRUGGLING, CRYING, HE...
BLOODY HELL.
FABLE...

HEY, BIG FELLA! SMILE!
CAN I HAVE YOUR AUTOGRAPH PLEASE, MR. FABLE?
823
GUY, ANY TRUTH ABOUT YOU AND MADONNA?
NO COMMENT.
HEY, GUY, ARE YOU HURT?
HUH?
JESUS. BLOOD... I...
WHERE'S IT COMING FROM? I AIN'T CUT OR ANYTHING...
OKAY, CAN WE HAVE SOME QUIET? WE GOTTA TIGHT SCHEDULE TODAY.
WHERE THE HELL IS ***FABLE?***
STILL IN HIS DRESSING ROOM. DOES ***NOT*** LOOK HAPPY.
HOLLYWOOD MON.
SCENE 10
TAKE 1

COME ON, MATE! NOT LIKE YOU TO COME THE OLD **PRIMA DONNA!** DON'T THROW A **WOBBLY** ON ME ...
GO TO HELL. GUY FABLE IS AN **ARTIST.** IF HE AIN'T IN THE MOOD, **EVERYONE** WAITS.
THAT INCLUDES TALENTLESS LITTLE SHITS LIKE **YOU,** LOOT.
DO YOU HAVE ANY KIDS?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
JUST WONDERING IF YOU HAVE ANY **NIPPERS** SCATTERED ABOUT. I KNOW WHAT YOU **SUPERSTUDS** ARE LIKE...
WHAT YOU GETTING AT? WHAT'RE YOU **INSINUATING?**
GNNNNN!
YOU GET ON THE WRONG SIDE OF ME, MISTER, AND YOUR WONDERBOY REPUTATION WON'T MEAN A **DAMN THING,** UNDERSTAND?
MY, MY. TOUCH**EE**.
YOU'RE ON IN FIVE MINUTES, DUCKY. **DO** BE A LOVE AND TRY TO BE THERE.
FABLE
RIGHT TO DIE
THE PROCESSED FILM ARRIVES AT MIDNIGHT. I WAIT 'TIL I'M ALONE. DON'T WANT ANYONE ELSE TO SEE THIS.
HOPE I WASN'T **DREAMING** YESTERDAY.
CANDICE FLOWERS. STUFFY OLD TART. ALWAYS GOING ON ABOUT **THEATER** AND HER OLD MATE **SIR LARRY...**
I THINK THE ONLY WAY WE'RE GOING TO SURVIVE IS IF WE CAN **LOVE** EACH OTHER...
THE MORE WE **HATE,** THE MORE THE MONSTERS **ATTACK** US. MAYBE THIS IS A **TEST** OF OUR CAPACITY TO **LOVE** ONE ANOTHER...

HOLD IT. WHAT'S HAPPENING TO HER FACE?
A PRIEST ONCE GAVE ME A DEFINITION OF HELL. HE SAID IT WAS FULL OF PEOPLE WHO WERE STARVING, ALTHOUGH THE PLACE WAS FULL OF FOOD...
SCARS! COSMETIC SURGERY SCARS! OH, INCREDIBLE! CANDICE FLOWERS, THE SERIOUS ACTRESS, HAS HAD A FACE LIFT!
THE PROBLEM WAS THEIR FINGERNAILS WERE SO LONG THEY COULDN'T FEED THEMSELVES, SO THEY STARVED...
I ASKED HIM WHAT HEAVEN WAS LIKE. HE SAID IT WAS EXACTLY THE SAME.
HELLO PICTURE'S CHANGED ALL GRAINY... BLEEDING HECK, IT'S A PORNO MOVIE! CANDICE CAN'T BE MORE THAN SIXTEEN! THIS IS WONDERFUL!
THE ONLY DIFFERENCE, HE SAID, WAS THAT IN HEAVEN THEY HAVE LEARNED TO FEED EACH OTHER...
THE FILM, SOMEHOW, IS SHOOTING THE TRUTH ABOUT THESE STARS, SHOWING THE REAL HOLLYWOOD MONSTERS.
I SIT THROUGH THIRTY SECONDS OF HARD CORE CANDICE FLOWERS GRUNTING AND GROANING UNDER FOUR STUDS.
AND THEN MACHO MAN COMES ON AGAIN...
I DIDN'T WANNA HURT HER. I JUST WANTED TO WALK WITH HER, THEN I JUST WANTED TO TOUCH HER. NOTHING DIRTY...
NOTHING LIKE THAT. I JUST WANTED...
BUT SHE STARTED RUNNING. WHY? I WOULDN'T HURT HER! I GOT SCARED. SHE MIGHT TELL SOMEONE. MAKE IT SOUND WORSE THAN IT WAS...
I RAN AFTER HER, JUST TO TALK TO HER, BUT SHE KEPT RUNNING, I...

SHIT! DON'T DIE ON ME NOW! WHAT HAPPENED?! WHAT DID HE DO...?
COME ON, BABY. DON'T LET EDDIE DOWN NOW...
AHH. BETTER. LIGHTS. A ROOM. PRETTY DARK. HOLD ON, THAT'S...
THAT'S *THIS* ROOM, THE ONE *I'M* IN, SOMEONE'S...
IT'S ME! I'M LOOKING AT THE RUSHES. OH... I DON'T THINK I LIKE THIS, I...
WAIT! SOMETHING'S THERE! *BEHIND* ME. TURN ROUND! SOMEONE'S BEHIND YOU!
THANK GOD, I TURN, AND... WHAT DO I SEE? COME ON, WHAT DO I SEE?
I'M OPENING MY MOUTH BUT NOTHING'S COMING OUT... AND...
IN THE SHADOWS, IT'S ONE OF THEM, ONE OF THE *MONSTERS*.
I CAN'T MOVE I'M BLEEDING TRANSFIXED THEN I RECOGNIZE THE MONSTER.
IT'S ME!
IT'S ME!
OH GOD.
MY FACE! IT'S RIPPING MY FACE OFF...

ENOUGH. THIS IS CRAZY. MAYBE IT'S ALL IN MY HEAD.
TOO MUCH **BRANDY** AND **NOSE POWDER**. MAYBE I...
OH SHIT...
WHAT'S THAT? IN THE CORNER? MOVING? NO...
OH GOD, NO...
NOOOOOAAAAAH
GEE, HARVEY, THIS IS ***HORRIBLE***. I WANNA GO HOME...
THIS ISN'T THE ***NEW TOM HANKS*** MOVIE.
IT ***SAID*** TOM HANKS OUTSIDE, IRENE.
TOM HANKS IN "AW SHUCKS MOMMA'S TURNED INTO A BULLPIT TERRIER," THAT'S WHAT IT SAID.
SEE, IT SAYS TOM... OH...
"***THE AMERICAN SCREAM***"? WHAT KINDA MOVIE'S THAT, HARVEY?
THE AMERICAN SCREAM

HEY, FAR **OUT**.
WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO?
I CAN REACH OUT. TOUCH YOUR FLOWER-LIKE FACE WITH FINGERS OF LIMPID AIR...
YEAH. VERY CUTE.
HOW MUCH MONEY D'WE HAVE LEFT? I'VE GOT A HOLE WHERE MY STOMACH USED TO BE.
A FEW DOLLARS. WHAT DO YOU DO IN AMERICA ONCE YOUR MONEY'S RUN OUT?
STARVE.
HOW LONG D'WE HAVE TO STAY HERE, ANYHOW?
WHO KNOWS. THE **MADNESS** IS HERE. WE'LL FIND IT OR IT WILL FIND US.
TWO DAYS AGO WE WATCHED THE SUNSET IN **ARIZONA**, THE TEMPERATURE CRASHING AS THE SUN WENT DOWN...
AT NIGHT KATHY ASKED ME TO HOLD HER. JUST HOLD HER. SHE SLEPT LIKE A CHILD.

WE WERE GETTING GROCERIES WHEN THE ROAD STARTED DISTORTING. I FELT MY SPINE SHIVER AND KNEW IT HAD FOUND ME AGAIN.
GROCERY
ED'S GROCERY
COLOR TV AIR CONDITIONING ICE CABLE
THE MADNESS STREAM. IT'S MY UMBILICAL CORD. SO DOES THAT MAKE THE MADNESS MY MOTHER?
YEAH, I SUPPOSE IT DOES.
I HELD ON TO KATHY. I DIDN'T WANT TO LOSE HER.
I WANTED TO BE WITH HER WHEREVER THE MADSTREAM TOOK US.
HOLLYWOOD...
MY GOD, IT'S AWFUL. WHAT'S THIS BROWN STUFF?
THAT'S THE MEAT, STUPID. IT'S A HAMBURGER. WE HAVE TO GET SOME MONEY. MAYBE WE CAN GET A JOB...
WILL THIS DO?
HEY! WHERE DID YOU...?
NO. DON'T TELL ME. YOU MADE IT!
I'M NOT SURE HOW LONG IT WOULD FOOL ANYONE FOR...
DO YOU LIKE THE BIRDS? SAPPHIRE DOVES FROM THE NORTHERN MOUNTAINS OF META...
S-SURE, SHADE. WONDERFUL.
BUT I THINK IT'S STARTING...
605

5
IT'S CANDICE FLOWERS! THE MOVIE STAR! WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HER? IS SHE REAL OR ...?
HOW DO I KNOW?
HEY, EXCUSE ME, ARE YOU...
YES, YES, GIVE IT TO ME YOU BASTARD, YOU BASTARD...
SHADE...?
SHUT YOUR EYES. CLEAR YOUR MIND. HOLD ONTO ME...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I'M TRYING TO GET US...
...OUT...
SHEESH!
WELCOME TO HOLLYWOOD.

DID YOU SEE HIS *FACE?* THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT! WHO COULD *DO* THAT?
CHRIST KNOWS. GUY FABLE ALWAYS THOUGHT HE WAS *OVERRATED,* BUT *NO* ONE DESERVES THAT.
I'M, AH, I'M OFF TO THE CHURCH TO SAY A FEW *PRAYERS* FOR THE BOY. ANY OF YOU FOLK WANT TO TAG ALONG?
GOOD IDEA, KENT. MAYBE WE SHOULD ALL SHOW OUR RESPECT AND GRIEF AND THAT.
THERE'LL BE A LOT OF *MEDIA* AROUND.
SO LONG, LOOT. LOOKS LIKE THAT'S THE LAST OF THE HOLLYWOOD MONSTERS.
STILL THINK WE SHOULDA USED AN *AMERICAN* GUN.
ZIP PAN TO
67-320
EXTREME CLOSE-UP CAMERA. IT TWITCHES SLIGHTLY, LIKE A NERVOUS EYE.
CUT TO
EXTREME CLOSE-UP ROLL OF FILM.
SLOWLY, THE FILM BEGINS TO RUN, PHANTOM SHAPES DANCING IN THE FRAMES. DISSOLVE TO...
CLOSE-UP KENT HARTON, HIS CRUNCHED-UP FACE DEEP IN PRAYER...

DOLLY BACK. WE SEE KENT LIFTING A SMALL BOTTLE OF **AMYL NITRATE** TO HIS NOSE. HE SNIFFS LOUDLY.
EYES SWIMMING AS THE RUSH HITS...
CAMERA PANS ACROSS THE BATHS, BARE LIMBS OF YOUNG MEN IN STEAMY ALCOVES...
KENT HARTON ON HIS KNEES NEXT TO TWO ADONISES. SOUND OF MOANS AND LAUGHTER AND LOUD RAP MUSIC. CUT TO...
OUTSIDE SHOP FRONT WINDOW. FOREGROUND TYPICAL FAMILIES. KENT'S FANCLUB, THEIR FACES SICKENED AND MORTIFIED.
OTHER SIDE OF WINDOW THE HOMOSEXUAL STEAM BATH ORGY...
MY GOD. I'VE HEARD OF ***OUTING***, BUT...
THIS REALLY MUST BE A MISTAKE. A PIRATE STATION? NO. GOOD LORD, POOR KENT. POOR, POOR KENT.
AM I GOING MAD? NO. MY HEART IS RACING. NOT THROUGH EXCITEMENT, THAT KIND OF THING MERCIFULLY LONG GONE FOR ME.
FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE I THINK I WANT SOME ***FRESH AIR***.
FRESH AIR. WHAT WOULD THEY THINK IN NEW YORK, CRISPIN?

WHAT'S HAPPENING, SHADE? ARE WE WATCHING A MOVIE OR WHAT? THAT OLD GUY'S WATCHING A MOVIE TOO...
AND WHO'S WATCHING *US?*
THE BARRIERS BETWEEN ***MAKE-BELIEVE*** AND ***REALITY*** ARE DISSOLVING. THIS ***IS*** TINSELTOWN, AFTER ALL. THE MADNESS HERE JUST ***HAS*** TO BE ***SHOWBIZ...***
"WISH I KNEW WHAT TO ***DO*** ABOUT IT..."
I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT WAS THAT ***NICE KENT HARTON*** IN THAT HORRID FILM...
SOMETHING'S GOING ON, HARVEY. ***ALL*** THE CINEMAS ARE SHOWING WICKED MOVIES.
TRIED TO FORGET IT, DEAREST. WE'RE ALMOST HOME NOW.
OH MY...
THIS IS ***MY*** BLOODY MOVIE. NO ONE'S GONNA TAKE IT OFF ME.
I'M GONNA FINISH ***HOLLYWOOD MONSTERS*** IF IT KILLS ME ***AGAIN...***
HEY, SUZIE, COME AND LOOK AT THIS MOVIE. IT'S FRIGGIN' ***UNREAL.***
THIS DEAD DIRECTOR AFTER THESE TWO JERKS, DETERMINED TO FINISH HIS HORROR MOVIE...

YOU KNOW I DON'T LIKE **HORROR** MOVIES. THEY...
...I DON'T **BELIEVE** IT!
WHAT DON'T YOU BELIEVE?
MOM AND DAD! THAT'S MY MOM AND DAD!
THEY MUST'VE BEEN **MOONLIGHTING!** ACTING WITHOUT TELLING YOU!
"NO, THEY WOULDN'T DO THAT. LOOK, THAT'S **OUR STREET.** THEY'RE RUNNING UP OUR STREET..."
"THAT'S OUR HOUSE!"
THE MONSTER'S GOING TO **GET** THEM! **RUN!** RUN, MOM, **RUN!**
WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT? IT'S ONLY ON **TEE VEE!**
YOU CAN'T ESCAPE IT.
EVERYWHERE THERE ARE SCREENS, PICTURES, IMAGES, SOUNDS. THEY WON'T LET YOU BE ALONE. AMERICA IS SCARED OF BEING ALONE.
CLO
PLEASE

NO PARKING ANY TIME
CAN'T YOU FEEL THE TINGLE IN THE AIR?
THIS IS THE SUBTLEST MANIFESTATION OF THE MADNESS WE'VE COME ACROSS. IF WE'RE NOT CAREFUL WE COULD GET UTTERLY LOST.
WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR? IT'S NOT SAFE AROUND HERE AT NIGHT.
YOU MEAN WE'RE NOT ALREADY? I WANT A DRINK.
LATER. THIS IS *EXQUISITELY* WEIRD, KATHY. I THINK WE'RE ALL IN EACH OTHER'S *FILMS*.
OR AT LEAST, UNLESS I CAN FIND OUT WHO'S *RESPONSIBLE* FOR THE MADNESS, WE ALL SOON WILL BE...
"I DON'T KNOW IF THERE'LL BE ANY ESCAPE FROM THAT..."
CUT TO...
EXTREME LONG SHOT. HOLLYWOOD. NIGHT.
FLICKERING LIGHTS, HORIZON LIKE THE GNARLED SPINE OF A MONSTER STIRRING FROM SLEEP, MOANING, SPOILED, BARBARIC, INFANTILE...
A CACOPHONY OF BABBLING VOICES REACHING A DEAFENING CLIMACTIC *EXPLOSION* OF SOUND...

CUT TO MEDIUM SHOT, A CINEMA SCREEN. THE FOUR STARS OF **HOLLYWOOD MONSTERS** CELLULOIDALLY CRUCIFIED...
FIRST **GUY FABLE**, HITTING THE LITTLE GIRL TO STOP HER **SCREAMING**...
CLOSE UP AS HE REALIZES HE'S HIT HER **TOO HARD**, A SCRAP OF HER POOR DRESS IN HIS TREMBLING FINGERS...
...TEARS OF DISGUST AND FEAR IN HIS EYES...
CUT TO **CANDICE FLOWERS**, HER SURGERY AND PORNOGRAPHY BEAMED CITY WIDE, ON WALLS, ON TV'S, IN NEON **SIGNS** ABOVE LAUNDROMATS...
CANDICE
NUDE NUDE NUDE
WE HEAR THE SOUND OF A CITY'S SHOCKED INTAKE OF BREATH. CUT TO...
EXT. A FASHIONABLE RESTAURANT IN **BEL AIRE**...
A STONED **KENT HARTON** ROMPS WITH A SPANISH CATAMITE BEFORE AN AGHAST PHALANX OF THE **IN SET**...
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DISSOLVE TO...
CLOSE-UP NAN POTTS, NOW **EMERALD DARLING**, SLASHING HER WRISTS IN A SHABBY BEDROOM. SOILED SHEETS, GREASY WALLPAPER...
A PHOTO OF THE BABY SHE GAVE AWAY TO PURSUE HER CAREER. JUST ANOTHER CLUMSY CRY FOR HELP.

CUT TO INT. FRONT ROOM. HOLLYWOOD'S MAKING ITS OWN MOVIE...
AND EVERYONE'S FREEBASING TINSELTOWN...
GET AWAY! GET AWAY!
AH, THIS IS A BLOODY BEAUTIFUL **MOVIE MOMENT**...
IT'LL HAVE 'EM ***PISSING*** 'EMSELVES IN THE BACK ROW...
SHADE, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
HOLD ON TO ME. GONNA TRY TO GET INTO IT...
INTO IT? WHAT ARE YOU ***TALKING***--
OH.
EXIT
BLOODY 'ELL! WHO ARE ***YOU***?
GOOD QUESTION.

IS HE DEAD? DID I GET IT?
LOOKS LIKE IT. NECK'S BROKEN. NO FACE LEFT.
WELCOME
PHONE FOR AN AMBULANCE, SHADE...
IT'S OKAY, HONEY. IT'S ALL OVER NOW... IT'S ALL OVER...
SO IS THAT IT? WE'VE WON? YOU'VE BEATEN THE MADNESS?
IF HE **HAD** THE MADNESS, IF HE WAS **CREATING** IT ALL, I GUESS I HAVE...
HE WAS THE **DIRECTOR** WE SAW ON TV. KILLED BY THE FILM HE WAS MAKING...
BOB
BAR
A DIRECTOR. THAT FIGURES, DIRECTING THE MADNESS.
I COULD **MURDER** A DRINK, SHADE D'YOU THINK MAYBE YOU COULD CONJURE UP SOME OF THAT **MONEY?**
DON'T SEE WHY NOT NICE **RELAX** AFTER GOING TO THE MOVIES...
HUH?

SEEMS THAT WAS JUST A *TRAILER*, SHADE...
THE *MAIN PERFORMANCE* IS JUST BEGINNING...
NEXT
HOLLYWOOD MONSTERS II

MCCARTHYISM

HOLLYWOOD BABBLE ON II
PETER MILLIGAN, Writer
CHRIS BACHALO, Penciller
MARK PENNINGTON, Inker
DANIEL VOZZO, Colorist
TODD KLEIN, Letterer
TOM PEYER, Asst. Editor
KAREN BERGER, Editor
STEVE DITKO, Creator
WHAT A SCREAM. IT'S JUST LIKE A BUSBY BERKELEY MOVIE.
HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT STUFF?
FROM THE DEEP CULTURE TANK ON META. THERE WAS A SECTION ON HOLLYWOOD.
SEEMS IT WASN'T THE DIRECTOR WHO WAS MAD...
LISTEN, IF I DON'T GET A DRINK DOWN ME SOON, I'M GONNA GO MAD MYSELF.
WHO THE HELL IS DOING ALL THIS, THEN?
CUT TO...
CLOSE UP, THE CAMERA.
LENS GLINTING LIKE THE MONOCLED EYE OF GEORGE SANDERS. DISSOLVE TO...
A "REAL" HOUSEWIFE, PLUCKED FROM HER BATHROOM AS SHE WAS WAXING HER MOUSTACHE...
STARTLED TO FIND HERSELF SUDDENLY ON THE SET OF A SIMULATED BUSBY BERKELEY SPECTACULAR.

DOLLY BACK: SCORES OF DAZED *"ORDINARY FOLK"* NOW THRONG THE BERKELEY SET.
LIFTED FROM THE HUMDRUM HORROR OF THEIR HUMDRUM LIVES AND PLANTED IN THIS MAGICAL WONDERWORLD. DOLLY IN...
MEDIUM CLOSE: KEN BURKE, WHO WAS ABOUT TO SMACK HIS KID AND NOW *SMACKS AIR*...
ANNIE WIGAN, WHO STEPPED OUT OF A BATH AND INTO THE IMPOSSIBLE...
...HANK POWER, CROSSDRESSING IN HIS MOTHER'S UNDERCLOTHES. ***AGAIN.***
SUSAN LEE, DAYDREAMING OF WARM CUSTARD AND BLAKE CARRINGTON, ***AGAIN***.
CUTE. EVERYONE'S A STAR. EVERYONE'S IN THE MOVIES.
AND THE ***MOVIES*** ARE IN ***EVERYONE***. SO WHAT HAPPENS NOW?
NOW THE WORLD LURCHES VIOLENTLY AS THE BAROQUE SCENE BEGINS TO CRUMBLE IN A KIND OF MELODRAMATIC, ***OLD TESTAMENT*** WAY.
DOLLY IN SLOWLY.

...AS THE ORDINARY FOLK START TUMBLING INTO THE ANGRY WATERS...
AND WE HEAR THE THEME TUNE TO *JAWS* AS A HUGE BLACK FIN SLICES THROUGH THE FOAM...
DUNNDUNNDUNNDUNNDUNNDU
MY GOD, IT'S GOT HIM, THE SHARK'S GOT HIM...
WHERE'S THE MADNESS *COMING* FROM? I CAN'T *FIGHT* IT UNTIL I...
KATHY, UP THERE! A *CAMERA*. WE'RE BEING *FILMED*!
SO?
SO I CAN *FEEL* IT. SEE A KIND OF *AURA* AROUND IT.
THAT'S WHERE THE *MADNESS* IS COMING FROM...

BUT A CAMERA'S JUST A **MACHINE**. IT **CAN'T** HAVE THE MADNESS. THAT DOESN'T MAKE **SENSE**.
IF IT MADE **SENSE** IT WOULDN'T BE THE **MADNESS**, WOULD IT?
DAMN! IT'S CHANGING THE SCENE!
I FEEL SICK. JUST TELL ME WHEN THIS IS ALL OVER...
JESUS! D'YOU KNOW HOW TO **RIDE** THIS THING?
PROBABLY.
SHOW ME WHERE THE **BRAKES** ARE...
HEY, SHADE, ALL THIS, IT'S DOWN TO THAT **SCREAM**, RIGHT?
THE **AMERICAN SCREAM**, YEAH. HE OR IT IS BEHIND IT ALL. CAN ALMOST FEEL ITS **BONY FACE** GRINNING AT US...
YOU OKAY BACK THERE?
GUESS SO. COULD **STILL** DO WITH A **DRINK**, THOUGH.
SO WHAT'S NEW?

BIKE TRASH!
THE LEATHER-CLAD SCUM WHO WERE TOO FAST TO LIVE... BUT TOO TOUGH TO DIE!
TO THE FEATURES EDITOR, THE VOICE. HAVE BEEN UNAVOIDABLY DELAYED IN HOLLYWOOD OWING TO THE TOWN BEING TAKEN OVER AND SUCKED INTO MOVIELAND ITSELF.
YOURS SYNOPTICALLY, CRISPEN KEEN, FILM EDITOR.
BIKE TRASH!
THE LEATHER-CLAD SCUM WHO WERE TOO FAST TO LIVE... BUT TOO TOUGH TO DIE!
P.S.: PLEASE GET FRANK TO WATER MY PLANTS, ESPECIALLY THE DRAGONTREE. TA.
HA! KEEN'S OFF HIS TROLLEY AGAIN, THEY'D SAY, SILLY OLD SOD, BUT NO MATTER.
THE LEATHER-CLAD SCUM WHO WERE TOO FAST TO LIVE... BUT TOO TOUGH TO DIE!
THE FACT THAT EVERYTHING IS GOING QUITE MAD, THAT MAKE-BELIEVE IS STORMING REALITY-CONTROL IS NEITHER HERE NOR THERE.
THE MOVIES ARE TAKING OVER, AS ONE DREADED THEY WOULD. SOMETHING UNLIKELY IS EMERGING FROM THE WALL, BUT NO MATTER...
I MUST KEEP A CLEAR HEAD.
IF I'M TO SURVIVE WITH MY MIND INTACT, I MUST PUT MY QUEER SHOULDER FIRMLY TO THE WHEEL OF OBJECTIVITY.

ALL THE YEARS THE PUBLIC LIVED **VICARIOUSLY** THROUGH FILM, NOW THEY'RE **LIVING** IT. BUT LIFE ISN'T LIKE FILM. LIFE'S GOT TOO MANY **PLOT DEFECTS**...
WHOM TO BLAME? WHO'S THE **DIRECTOR**, THE *AUTEUR*, OF LIFE? WHO WRITES THESE UTTERLY ABSURD **SCREENPLAYS?**
GOD? BUT GOD DOESN'T EXIST. AND IF HE DOES HE'S MORE **GODDARD** THAN **SPIELBERG**...
IN THE FILM OF LIFE YOU USUALLY HAVE NO IDEA WHAT'S HAPPENING, YOU DON'T MUCH CARE, AND THERE ARE **PAINFULLY** LONG EPISODES OF **TEDIUM**...
THERE'S NO *DENOUEMENT* IN REAL LIFE. THERE ARE NO HAPPY ENDINGS. THERE AREN'T EVEN ANY **McGUFFINS**...
THE **REAL** REALITY OF A PERSON'S LIFE IS AN **INCOHERENT** REALITY...
...WITH SCENES AND CHARACTERS PASSING IN AND OUT OF THE STORY WITH **NO MEANING**...
OR WITH A MEANING THAT MAKES **NO SENSE** WHATSOEVER.
H-HELP...
YOU GOTTA **HELP** ME...

HEY,.. GUY FABLE **KNOWS** YOU... GUY FABLE...
...ONLY GIVES INTERVIEWS BY APPOINTMENT. RATHER LIKE THE QUEEN OF ENGLAND.
HOW CAN I HELP YOU, MR. FABLE?
THEY'RE **AFTER** US, BEEN CHASING US FOR HOURS, JUST LIKE IN THE **MOVIE**.
WHAT'S **HAPPENING?** GUY FABLE'S SEEN HIMSELF ON SCREENS ALL OVER TOWN...
ALL FOUR OF US ARE BEING **CRUCIFIED**...
WAIT A MOMENT. **WHO** ARE AFTER YOU?
THE **HOLLYWOOD MONSTERS**. AND THE DIRECTOR, ED LOOT, WHO SHOULD BE DEAD BUT ISN'T...
IT'S JUST LIKE IN THE MOVIE WE WERE MAKING, BUT THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE. HOW IS THIS **HAPPENING?**
HE'S RIGHT. WHOLE PLACE HAS GONE CRAZY. THE MONSTERS ARE AFTER US... AND WE FOUR HAVE BEEN...
WELL, YOU'VE PROBABLY **SEEN** WHAT'S HAPPENED TO **US**.
COULDN'T FAIL TO. I'M AFRAID YOU'VE BEEN BATHING PUBLICLY IN THE WATERS OF FOUL OPPROBRIUM...
FOR CHRISSAKE, WHY CAN'T YOU TALK **NORMAL** INSTEAD OF THAT FANCY BULLSHIT FAGGOT-BRAINED...
GUY, GUY, COOL DOWN, SON. THERE'S NO TIME FOR THAT...
...THEY'VE **FOUND** US AGAIN...

CUT TO: THE BIKERS, SPEEDING TOWARDS THE LITTLE TOWN OF LUCAS...
WE HEAR A SCREAMING OVERHEAD, AN EAR-SPLITTING SIREN RENDING THE AIR. TILT UP...
...AND ZOOM IN ON THE BLONDE BOMBSHELLS, SHRIEKING LIKE VALKYRIES...
...EXUDING AN AIR OF UNATTAINABLE SEX, UNIMAGINABLE NEUROSES...
...AND UNUSUALLY EXPLOSIVE TEMPERAMENTS...
BMMBMMBMM
WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF THIS SCENE-- GET TO THE CAMERA BEFORE IT KILLS US.
MAYBE WE SHOULD TRY ANOTHER MOVIE. I DON'T LIKE THIS ONE AT ALL.
LETHAL ACTING
HAVE YOU SEEN THIS ONE?
UH UH... PROBABLY SOME MACHO BAD-ASS COP BULLSHIT. THE USUAL.
WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR THEN?
EXIT
EXIT

CUT TO: ROOF TOP. URGENT MUSIC IN AND UP. ELEMENTS OF HITCHCOCK'S ***VERTIGO*** AS KATHY TEETERS ON THE EDGE OF OBLIVION...
SHADE? WHAT'S HAPPENED? I DON'T LIKE HEIGHTS, SHADE, I...
GET OFF THE EDGE, LADY. ***JUMPING*** AIN'T GONNA SOLVE ***NOTHING.***
WHAT AM I SAYING? THOSE WEREN'T MY WORDS...
GET AWAY, KATHY. THE ***CAMERA'S*** MAKING YOU DO THIS. JUST...
NO! DON'T COME NEAR ME, YOU CREEP. I'M NO GOOD TO ANYONE. I'M JUST A WASHED-UP HAS-BEEN ***ALCOHOLIC*** WITH AN ***ATTITUDE*** PROBLEM...
OKAY, LADY, SUIT YOURSELF. JUMP. BUT MAKE IT QUICK. I GOT TICKETS FOR THE ***BALL GAME*** TONIGHT.
SHADE, DON'T BE CRAZY! ***HELP*** ME! I'M TRYING TO GET AWAY FROM THE EDGE, BUT I CAN'T...
SHADE!
OKAY, CUT. THAT'S A TAKE. ***WONDERFUL,*** KATHY...
BUT SHADE, DARLING, I THINK YOU COULD PULL BACK JUST AN ***EENSY*** BIT. YOU'RE A ***BAD-ASS STREET COP,*** NOT BLOODY ***HAMLET.***

CUT TO: CLOSE-UP, KATHY.
PALE FACE LOOKING CONFUSED...
DOLLY BACK. INT., DARKENED MOVIEHOUSE.
KATHY SITS ALONE, SURROUNDED BY EERIE ROWS OF EMPTY SEATS...
THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATRONAGE. THE MANAGEMENT HOPES YOU'LL ENJOY TONIGHT'S MAIN PROGRAM.
OH MY GOD...
MOM... DAD...
DRNGGG DRNNG
S'OKAY, I'LL GET IT...
MORNING, MA'AM.
GROCERIES.

NO... I DON'T WANT TO WATCH THIS...
AIIIIGHHH
BUT YOU MUST...
IT'S OKAY, THOUGH. IT'S ONLY A MOVIE.
IEEEIEEEEE
KATHY!!
EXIT

NO!!!!
I'M NOT MAD. I GET MAD, BUT...
...I'M NOT MAD...
EXIT
KATHY! KATHY, YOU OKAY?
KATHY, SAY SOMETHING...
IT'S JUST TRYING TO BREAK YOU, KATHY. DON'T LET IT. I KNOW HOW STRONG YOU ARE.
YOU'VE COME THROUGH WORSE THAN THIS BEFORE.
LET'S JUST GET OUT OF HERE.

"THEY KNOW WE'RE IN HERE."
"THE BASTARDS WON'T REST UNTIL THEY'VE KILLED US ALL!"
AND IT'S MY FAULT. A PUNISHMENT. FOR WHAT I DID.
IT *WAS* PRETTY GROSS, FABLE. I MEAN, I ALWAYS TOOK YOU FOR A *JERK*, BUT JEEZ, A *CHILD KILLER*.
BUT I DIDN'T MEAN IT. ALL MY LIFE I'VE MANAGED TO KEEP THESE FEELINGS IN CHECK. JUST THAT ONCE, JUST THAT ONCE THEY GOT THE BETTER OF ME...
BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO HURT HER. I LOVE KIDS. IT WAS AN ACCIDENT.
D'YOU THINK A DAY'S GONE BY WHEN I HAVEN'T THOUGHT ABOUT HER? AND HER POOR PARENTS? I *HATE* MYSELF.
SORRY, BUT IF THIS WAS A *FILM,* THAT WOULDN'T BE ENOUGH, GUY. BEST YOU COULD HOPE FOR WAS TO DIE DOING SOMETHING HEROIC.
SAVING ANOTHER'S LIFE, PERHAPS. A HINT AT REDEMPTION. BUT THEY COULDN'T LET A CHILD-SLAYER GET AWAY WITH IT. TOO *MESSY*...
THEY'D BE SCARED IT WOULD SUGGEST THEY DIDN'T TAKE YOUR CRIME *SERIOUSLY* ENOUGH.
WHAT ABOUT ME? I'M RUINED. I'D PROBABLY END UP AS A *JUNKIE* OR SOMETHING...
OH, NOT NECESSARILY, CANDICE. YOU HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING *EVIL*.
YOU'D HAVE TO SUFFER THE SLINGS AND ARROWS OF OUTRAGEOUS AND OUTRAGED MORALISTS, BUT YOU'D PROBABLY COME THROUGH...

YOU MIGHT EVEN BECOME A HEROINE. CHAMPION OF ALL THOSE WOMEN WHO HAD TO SELL THEMSELVES SEXUALLY AND AESTHETICALLY TO SUCCEED IN THE MALE-RUN SOCIETY.
YOU'D COME OUT ON TOP. BIG TEARFUL ENDING. DEFIANTLY CLENCHED FISTS, STRONG BUT FEMININE. OSCARS GALORE. WONDERFUL.
AND I'D BE THE BIGGEST GODDAMN STAR SINCE, SINCE WHOEVER'S BEEN THE BIGGEST EVER. ALL THOSE DICKS CHASING ME, BUT I'D LIKE BE TOTALLY IN CONTROL.
AH, I THINK NOT, DEAR EMERALD. EVEN YOU WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO PLEASE ENOUGH PEOPLE TO MAKE THAT ONE HAPPEN...
DROP DEAD, ASSHOLE.
SOON, DEAR, SOON.
NO, I FEEL YOUR FILM COULD EITHER GO UP OR DOWN. UP WOULD MEAN YOU FIND YOUR SWEET BABY AGAIN AND TURN YOUR BACK ON THE FAST LANE
DOWN, YOU DO AWAY WITH YOURSELF. A TERRIBLE LESSON ON THE EXCESSES OF AMBITION...
AH, BUT KENT! WHAT WOULD THEY DO WITH YOU? DRUGS AND PEDERASTY!
I FEAR AT BEST THEY'D LEAVE YOU TO MADNESS AND RUIN. A MORAL LESSON IN CASE ANY KIDS WERE WATCHING.
BUT LUCKILY OR NOT, THIS ISN'T A FILM, IS IT?
AND THE TRUTH IS WE'LL PROBABLY ALL DIE HERE...
...AND ALL THE STRANDS OF THE PLOT WILL NOT BE PULLED NEATLY TOGETHER AT THE END.
OH, MY GOD!
I'M AFRAID HE CAN'T HELP YOU, MY DEAR.

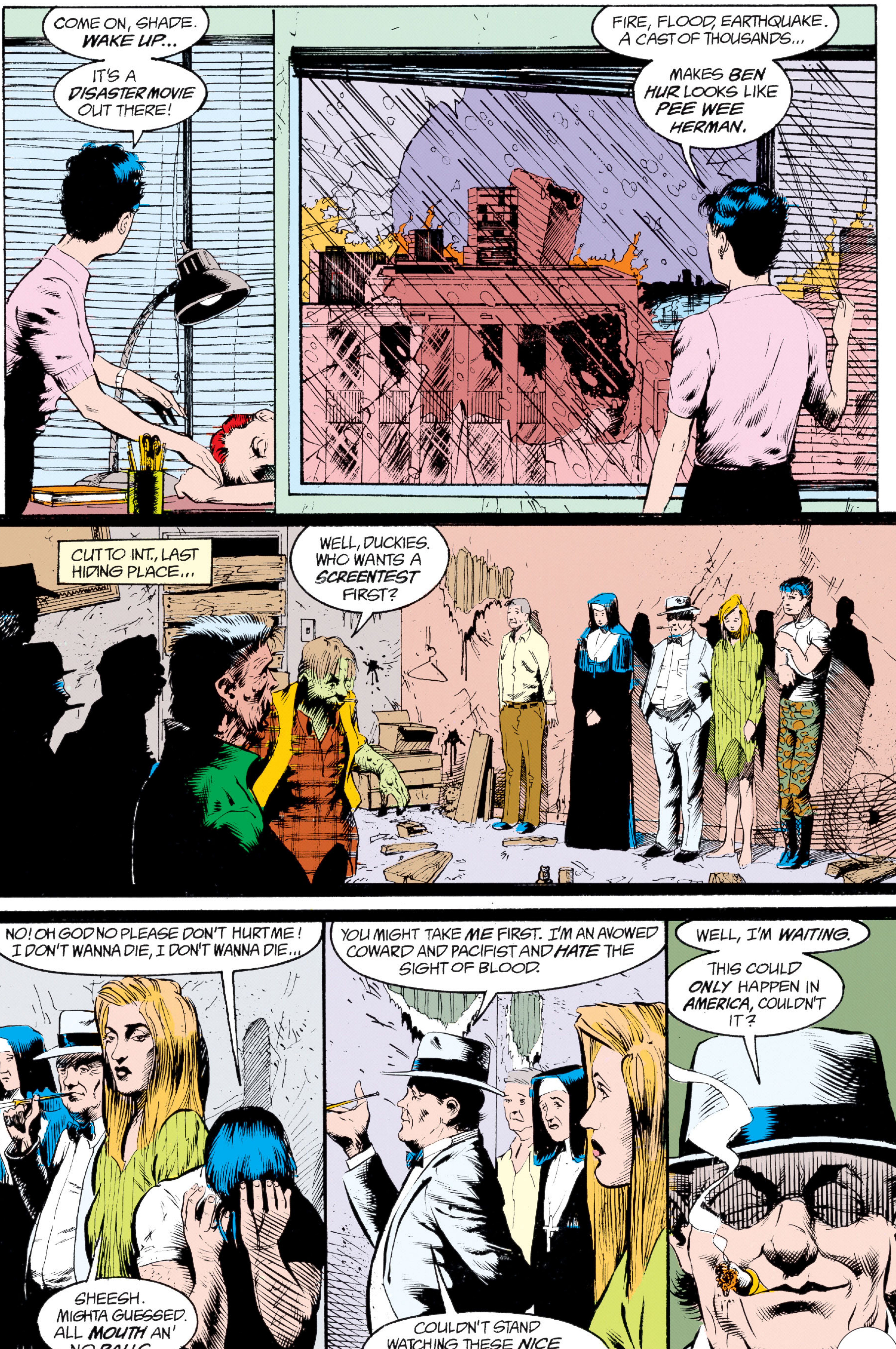
HOW ARE YOU NOW? CAN I GET YOU ANYTHING? DO ANYTHING AT ALL?
NO. IT'S OKAY. I'M OKAY NOW. THANKS.
I MEAN IT. THANKS, SHADE. YOU'RE ALL RIGHT.
WHAT HAPPENS NOW? THIS ISN'T OVER YET, IS IT?
I THINK WE'VE GOT TO FIND THAT **CAMERA**. MAYBE HEAD FOR THE STUDIO WHERE THEY WERE MAKING ***HOLLYWOOD MONSTERS***...
I'VE A BETTER IDEA. THE CAMERA'S MAKING A KIND OF CRAZY, ILLOGICAL MULTI-LAYERED ***MOVIE***, RIGHT?
ERR, YEAH, SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
WELL, YOU'RE THE ***CHANGING MAN***, AREN'T YOU? SO WHY NOT ***CHANGE*** THE MOVIE? WRITE A BETTER ONE! ONE WHERE...
ONE WHERE THE CAMERA GETS DESTROYED AND EVERYTHING GOES BACK TO NORMAL.
YES! KATHY, THAT'S BRILLIANT!
YEAH, BUT LISTEN, THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO TELL YOU. TO ***ASK*** YOU.
I GUESS AS WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO IS PRETTY RISKY I'D...
I KNOW, I'M FEELING THE SAME WAY, KATHY, I...
NO, NOTHING TO DO WITH ***THAT***. IT'S TO DO WITH THE ***MADNESS***.
WHEN I WAS INSIDE THE ***JFK HEAD*** I MET THE LITTLE GIRL. THE DEAD DAUGHTER OF DUANE, WHAT'S HIS NAME, ***TRILBY***.
BUT SHE WASN'T JUST PART OF THE MADNESS. I ***KNOW*** THAT. SHE REALLY ***WAS*** HIS DAUGHTER. SHE TALKED ABOUT HOW SHE DIED...

A GHOST, YOU MEAN?
I DON'T KNOW. I THINK MAYBE SOMETHING ELSE, SOMETHING STRONGER.
YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS, DON'T YOU?
IT MEANS THAT THE MADNESS, SOMEHOW, SOMETIMES, CAN BE A BRIDGE TO THE DEAD.
AND IF THAT'S TRUE, IT MEANS THE DEAD SURVIVE. ARE STILL THERE. IF THE LITTLE GIRL IS STILL AROUND, SO ARE... SO ARE...
SO ARE YOUR PARENTS. AND YOU THINK THAT THE MADNESS, OR THE MADNESS VEST, CAN GET YOU IN TOUCH.
I DON'T KNOW. THAT'S NOT SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN, THOUGH I GUESS WITH THE MADNESS NOTHING'S IMPOSSIBLE.
BUT SO WHAT? SO IT CAN, SOMETIMES, CONTACT THE DEAD. SO THAT MEANS THE DEAD DO SURVIVE.
SO WHAT? SO EVERYTHING! SO WHEN YOU GET TO CONTROL IT BETTER, YOU CAN HELP ME.
PUT ME IN TOUCH WITH MY MOM AND DAD. DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?
YEAH, BUT I THINK YOU SHOULD DROP IT. IF THE DEAD SURVIVE, IN SOME WAY, THAT'S GREAT, BUT DON'T CHASE THE DEAD.
IT'S NOT HEALTHY TO...
DON'T LECTURE ME ABOUT HEALTHY. THERE'S PART OF YOU THAT'S ANYTHING BUT HEALTHY, ISN'T THERE? THERE'S PART OF YOU THAT...
WHAT'S THAT NOISE...?
OH SHIT...

PARK & DRIVE

FREEZE FRAME. AS IF BY A MIRACLE, THE TIDAL WAVE HALTS, NOW A SOLID WALL OF WATER...
WHAT?... SHADE, IT'S STOPPED, WHAT'S...?
SHHH. I'M CONCENTRATING. I'M TRYING TO REWRITE THE FILM, LIKE YOU SAID...
...GETTING INSIDE THE MADNESS AND USING IT LIKE A TYPEWRITER...
YOU MEAN YOU'RE STOPPING THE WATER?
I HOPE IT'S ME.
CUT TO, A SCRIPTWRITER'S STUDY, SUNSET BOULEVARD. SUNLIGHT STEALING THROUGH VENETIAN BLINDS...
TAKE THIS DOWN, KATHY...
HEY, WAIT A MINUTE! I'M NO SECRETARY! I'M AT LEAST A SCRIPT EDITOR OR A PRODUCER OR SOMETHING...
WE HEAR A SMASH. INTO THE GLOOMY STUDY FLIES A STAR...
NOT A BIG STAR, NOT A KNOWN STAR, BUT ONE OF THE MANY, ONE OF THE STARS OF BROKEN DREAMS...
ONE OF THE STARS THAT NEVER WERE...
HATTIE MACKAY
HATTIE MACKAY, EVER HEARD OF HER? 'COURSE NOT! ENDED UP A WAITRESS...

SHADE...!
CUT TO EXT, MEDIUM SHOT. FROM EVERY BURNING SIDEWALK THE STARS THAT NEVER WERE EMERGE...
BUILD MUSIC UP, WE'RE REACHING THE BIG CLIMAX. THINGS HAPPENING FASTER NOW, GETTING WEIRDER.
CUT TO PARK. TRUCKING SHOT LADY SUICIDE, WITH ZIPS ON HER BLOODY WRISTS...
GASSY BREATHED, LEAVING IN HER WAKE A PHARMACOPOEIA OF NEMBUTAL, SECONAL AND A VARIETY OF FASHIONABLE BARBITURATES.
PAN TO THE CASTING COUCHES.
ACCOSTING YOUNG LADIES AND PROMISING TO MAKE THEM STARS. CUT TO...
INT. CINEMA, THE MOVIE SCREEN TEARS ITSELF FROM THE WALL...
...HOVERS LIKE A RIP IN REALITY ABOVE THE HUSHED AUDIENCE...


COME ON, SHADE. **WAKE UP...**
IT'S A **DISASTER MOVIE** OUT THERE!
FIRE, FLOOD, EARTHQUAKE. A CAST OF THOUSANDS...
MAKES **BEN HUR** LOOKS LIKE **PEE WEE HERMAN.**
CUT TO INT., LAST HIDING PLACE...
WELL, DUCKIES. WHO WANTS A ***SCREENTEST*** FIRST?
NO! OH GOD NO PLEASE DON'T HURT ME! I DON'T WANNA DIE, I DON'T WANNA DIE...
SHEESH. MIGHTA GUESSED. ALL ***MOUTH*** AN' NO ***BALLS.***
YOU MIGHT TAKE ***ME*** FIRST. I'M AN AVOWED COWARD AND PACIFIST AND ***HATE*** THE SIGHT OF BLOOD.
COULDN'T STAND WATCHING THESE ***NICE PEOPLE*** BEING TORN TO SHREDS.
WELL, I'M ***WAITING.***
THIS COULD ***ONLY*** HAPPEN IN ***AMERICA,*** COULDN'T IT?

FREEZE FRAME. SUDDEN SILENCE. HOLD SHOT...
BEAT BEAT BEAT
INT. STUDY. SCRIPTWRITER COMING TO...
CUT TO THE CAMERA, THE CAMERA WITH THE MADNESS...
WHY DID IT DO IT? HOW DID IT CATCH THE MADNESS? WE'LL NEVER KNOW.
AS WE DOLLY IN, CRACKS BEGIN TO APPEAR ON ITS SURFACE...
CLOSER AS A HIGH-PITCHED SCREAM ERUPTS FROM ITS SHUDDERING FORM...
IT EXPLODES, SCATTERING SHARDS OF METAL, GLASS, PLASTIC...
AND THEN SILENCE. BEAT. THEN, A BIRD SINGS, IT'S OVER.
SLOWLY, THE SOUND OF CHEERING, OF CELEBRATION, OF RELEASE RISES FROM THE STREETS...
IT'S OVER. OR ALMOST...
CUT TO

EXT. TARA. SOUNDS OF CANNON FIRE AND WARFARE IN DISTANCE. FLAMES ROAR THROUGH A LARGE PLANTATION HOUSE. DEATH THROES OF THE OLD SOUTH.
OH, RHETT, AH MUST HAVE BEEN CRAZY... AH LOVE YOU, RHETT...
FRANKLY, MY DEAR, I'M GLAD YOU DO.
KISS ME...
HOLD IT! **CUT!** THAT'S NOT FAIR, YOU BASTARD.
MAYBE IF YOU LOOKED LIKE **CLARK GABLE** I WOULDN'T MIND...
YOU'RE NOT EXACTLY **VIVIEN LEIGH** YOURSELF.
COME ON, WE SHOULD GO TO THE **STUDIO**. FIND THAT **CAMERA**.
I TAKE MY LEAVE.
THEY DON'T WANT ME AROUND TO SPOIL THE LIES WITH WHICH THEY'RE ALREADY PAPERING OVER THE CRACKS THAT APPEARED IN THEIR LIVES.

THIS ISN'T A FILM. THERE'S NOTHING RESOLVED. AN INCOHERENT SCREENPLAY, PEOPLE PASSING IN AND OUT OF IT WITH NO MEANING.
THIS ISN'T A FILM. THERE'S NOT EVEN A PROPER END.
I THINK I'D LIKE TO SEE **THE THAMES** AGAIN BEFORE I DIE.
CAN'T BREAK IT UP ANY MORE THAN THAT.
WHY DID IT GO **CRAZY,** ANYHOW?
WHO KNOWS? MAYBE ALL THE SHIT IT HAD TO FILM PLUS THE TOUCH OF THE **AMERICAN SCREAM**...
IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER WHY. IT JUST **WAS**.
GUESS THIS **CHANGES** THINGS, THOUGH. IF **INANIMATE OBJECTS** CAN GET THE MADNESS...
IT'S TOO BIZARRE. JUST THINK, A MAD WINDOW! A CRAZY **SIDEWALK**! JESUS!
AN INSANE COFFEE CUP. A **SCHIZOPHRENIC SHIRT**...

AND TALKING OF BIZARRE, ***THIS*** IS ***INCREDIBLE***. NO ONE HURT, NOTHING DAMAGED.
THIS IS ***TINSELTOWN***, REMEMBER. IT'S ONLY MAKE-BELIEVE...
YEAH, AND TOMORROW'S ANOTHER DAY...
YOU SAID IT...
3960
Q FA
...EXCUSE ME...
...I ***DO*** BEG YOUR PARDON. DAYDREAMING...
BUMP
D'YOU KNOW HIM?
UH UH. DON'T THINK SO...
FIN

The madness is rising... ...and only one man can stop it:

shade the changing man

A strange visitor from the dimension of Meta, Rac Shade has been given the task of trying to stem the growing tide of Earth's insanity, which has created an interdimensional "Area of Madness" threatening both Meta and Earth with chaos.

But upon breaching the barrier between worlds, Shade is trapped in the body of serial killer Troy Grenzer and finds himself on the run from the law as an escaped murderer. Unable to return home, Shade must rely on the help of the one person crazy enough to believe his story — Kathy George, the daughter of Grenzer's last victims — as he heads towards a confrontation with the growing embodiment of national psychosis: The American Scream.

As one of the founding titles of the VERTIGO imprint, SHADE, THE CHANGING MAN exploded all the preconceptions of what a super-hero comic could be and launched the now-legendary careers of writer ***Peter Milligan*** *(HUMAN TARGET, GREEK STREET,* X-Force*) and artist* ***Chris Bachalo*** *(DEATH: THE HIGH COST OF LIVING, STEAMPUNK,* Excalibur*). THE AMERICAN SCREAM collects the first six issues of this long-demanded series and reintroduces the remarkable, hallucinatory world that it brought to life.*

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suggested for mature readers